NATION

Smog chokes Delhi as air quality nears 'severe'

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BUSINESS

Jio users to get Rs 35,100 Google AI Pro for free

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SPORTS

India head to Melbourne with nose ahead

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 31 OCTOBER 2025 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 8 JUMADA I, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 296 | Pages: 8

Justice Surya Kant is new CJI, to assume office on 24 Nov

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Justice Surya Kant has been appointed as the 53rd Chief Justice of India, set to assume office on 24 November, 2025, succeeding Chief Justice BR Gavai, who retires on 23 November. The Union Law Ministry made the announcement via a notification, with Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal expressing his congratulations: "I convey my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to him." Born on 10 February, 1962, in Hissar district, Haryana, Justice Kant became a Supreme Court judge on 24 May, 2019. Justice Kant's tenure as Chief Justice will last nearly 15 months, concluding on 9 February, 2027, upon reaching the retirement age of 65.—*PTI*

CBSE board exams to start from 17 February

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Thursday released the official date sheet for the 2026 board examinations for Classes 10 and 12, with both exams scheduled to commence on 17 February, 2026. According to the timetable, the Class 10 exams will be conducted from 17 February to 10 March, 2026, while Class 12 exams will run until 9 April, 2026. The examination timings will generally be from 10.30am to 12.30pm, with certain papers extending to 1.30pm depending on subject duration. The first paper for Class 10 students will be Mathematics. The date sheet can be downloaded at cbse.gov.in. —*Salar News*

Guv Gehlot admitted to hospital with high fever

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has been hospitalised due to a high fever, hospital authorities confirmed on Thursday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visited the Governor in hospital and inquired about his health, wishing him a swift recovery. "Our Governor is unwell and admitted due to high fever. Investigations and treatment are ongoing at our Manipal hospital," the hospital stated. Gehlot was admitted on Monday, as sources from Raj Bhavan revealed. He had been in Madhya Pradesh, attending various events. "Maybe due to fatigue, he developed back pain along with mild fever," a source said.—*PTI*

US ends automatic work permit extension in blow to India

WASHINGTON, 30 OCT

Weeks after raising H1B visa fees to USD 100,000, the US authorities announced the end of the automatic extension of work permits for foreigners, a move expected to affect Indian workers and immigrants.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that starting 30 Oct 2025, applicants renewing their Employment Authorisation Documents (EADs) will no longer receive automatic extensions. The rule, it said, aims to "ensure proper screening and vetting of aliens" before any renewal.

"This is a commonsense measure to ensure vetting is completed before an alien's work authorisation is extended. Working in the US is a privilege, not a right," said USCIS Director Joseph Edlow.

The decision impacts spouses of H1B, L, and E visa holders, and individuals with refugee or asylee status. Affected workers are advised to renew their permits up to 180 days before expiry.

Previously, under the Biden-era rule, eligible applicants received a 540-day automatic extension upon timely filing for renewal.

The DHS clarified that existing EADs extended before 30 Oct 2025 will remain valid. The change follows President Donald Trump's earlier move to hike H-1B visa fees annually, further tightening immigration rules. According to the US Census Bureau, Indian Americans numbered 4.8 million in 2022, with two-thirds being immigrants. —*PTI*

Tempers cool; Trump cuts tariffs on China by 10%

Xi to allow export of rare earth elements and buy soybeans

SEOUL, 30 OCT

US President Donald Trump described his face-to-face with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday as a roaring success, saying he would cut tariffs on China, while Beijing had agreed to allow the export of rare earth elements and start buying American soybeans.

The President told reporters aboard Air Force One that the US would lower tariffs implemented earlier this year as punishment on China for its selling of chemicals used to make fentanyl from 20 per cent to 10 per cent.

That brings the total combined tariff rate on China down from 57 per cent to 47 per cent, which Trump had imposed over China's restrictions on exports of rare earth elements.

Trump said that he would go to China in April and Xi would come to the US "sometime after that." The President said they also discussed the export of more advanced computer chips to China, saying that Nvidia would be in talks with Chinese officials.

Trump said he could sign a trade deal with China "pretty soon."

"We do not have too many major stumbling blocks," Trump said.

However, China's Xinhua News Agency said that Xi told Trump that having some differences is inevitable during their 100-minute meeting.

"China will work with the US to properly resolve issues related to TikTok," China's Commerce Ministry said after the meeting.

US President Donald Trump meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea. The leaders were attending the APEC summit **PHOTO: PTI**

> I guess on the scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the best, I would say the meeting was a 12.
>
> -Donald Trump, US President

Trump wrote on his Truth Social that "our respective Energy teams will be meeting to see if such an Energy Deal can be worked out," while hailing Xi for promising to help curb the "fentanyl crisis".

Shortly before the meeting on Thursday, Trump posted on Truth Social that the meeting would be the "G2," a recognition of America and China's status as the world's biggest economies. The Group of Seven and the Group of 20 are other forums of industrialised nations. —*Agencies*

>>>*More on Page 6*

IN K'TAKA'S GURMITKAL

RSS march allowed on Kharge's turf

YADGIR, 30 OCT

The Yadgir district administration has granted conditional permission for a RSS route march on Friday, in Gurmitkal town, the home turf of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge.

Kharge, a Rajya Sabha MP, has been elected as MLA from the Gurmitkal constituency eight times.

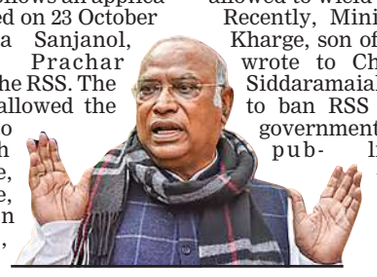
Permission for the march, organised as part of the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), was given on Wednesday by way of a government order after a detailed review of the route and security arrangements.

The order follows an application submitted on 23 October by Bassappa Sanjanol, District Prachar Pramukh of the RSS. The police have allowed the procession to pass through Samrat Circle, APMC Circle, Hanuman Temple, Marathawadi, Police Station Road, Milan Chowk, and Sihineeru Bavi Market Main Road before culminating at Ram Nagar. The district administration has attached 10 conditions, including saying that no roads should be blocked and no shops forcibly closed.

The organisers have been directed to ensure that no damage occurs to public or private property, and must bear the entire cost of any loss.

RSS volunteers are required to adhere to the route and must not raise slogans hurting religious or caste sentiments. However, it is not clear whether the RSS cadres will be allowed to wield lathis.

Recently, Minister Priyank Kharge, son of Mallikarjun, wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asking him to ban RSS activities on government schools and public places. —*PTI*



>>>*More on Page 2*

'GARBAGE DUMPING FESTIVAL'

The Greater Bengaluru Authority on Thursday launched the 'Garbage Dumping Festival' in which the civic workers dumped garbage in front of 218 households of 'serial litterers' >>>*More on Pg 2* **PHOTO: SALAR**

17 kids held hostage; accused shot

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Mumbai Police on Thursday rescued as many as 19 people, including 17 children, from a studio in Powai after an armed man, Rohit Arya, held them hostage for nearly an hour. Arya, who fired an air gun and threatened to harm the children, was shot by police during the operation and later died in hospital, officials said.

Arya had allegedly lured the children, aged around 15, to RA Studio in Mahavir Classic building under the pretext of a web series audition. Police received a distress call around 1.45pm, following which a Quick Response Team, Bomb Disposal Squad and fire brigade were rushed to the scene.

Rohit Arya **PHOTO: X**

Before the rescue, Arya posted a video saying he wanted to question certain people and threatened to set the studio ablaze if denied. Negotiations failed, prompting police to storm the studio through a bathroom entry and safely rescue all captives, 17 children, a senior citizen, and another man.

"It was a challenging operation, but saving the children was our priority," said DCP Datta Nalawade. Joint Commissioner of Police Satyanarayan confirmed that all hostages were unharmed. —*PTI*

HC stays SIT probe in Dharmasthala case

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The Karnataka High Court stayed the SIT investigation into the Dharmasthala mass burials case until 12 November. The court has also directed authorities not to issue further notices to the petitioners - activists Girish Mattanavar, Mahesh Thimmarodi, Jayant T, and Vittal Gowda - until the next hearing.

The activist had moved the High Court seeking to quash FIRs lodged against them by the Special Investigation Team registered on their own complaint.

PHOTO: PTI

Senior advocate Balan argued that the petitioners were issued 10 notices within just two months due to political, religious and organisational bias. He submitted that the case was initially filed under BNS Section 211-A and additional sections were later added without justification.

Special Public Prosecutor Jagadish representing the State said that the masked complainant had alleged that the individuals pushed him into wrongdoing.

However, senior advocate Deepak Khosla, representing the petitioners, said that police did not follow procedure. The petitioners said that the notices from the SIT were sent via WhatsApp and email. —*Salar News*

1 shot dead as Jan Suraaj candidate's convoy attacked

PATNA, 30 OCT

A supporter of the Jan Suraaj Party was reportedly shot dead in the Mokama area of Patna on Thursday. Dular Chand Yadav was campaigning for the party's candidate, Piyush Priyadarshi, at the time of his death.

"Police received information that a supporter of a candidate died during the campaign in the Mokama Taal area. The exact cause of the incident is not known yet, as the body has not been handed over to the police," said Patna Senior Superintendent of Police, Kartikeya K Sharma. He further stated, "Whether he died due to bullet injuries or it was an accidental death can only be known when police get the body." A significant number of security personnel have been deployed to the area, and an investigation is currently underway. —*PTI*

STATE HONOURS

Prakash Raj among 70 chosen for Rajyotsava awards

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

Film actor Prakash Raj, former Judge PB Bhajantri, former IAS officer H Siddaiah, Air Marshal (retd) Philip Rajkumar are among the 70 personalities who have been chosen for the prestigious Rajyotsava awards this year.

Socialist leader Konandur Lingappa, actor and director Vijayalakshmi Singh, civic worker Fakiri, veteran journalist M Siddarajau, ex-Alliance Francaise president Zafer Mohiuddin are among the other recipients of the award.

The award consists of a 25 gram gold medal and Rs 5 lakh in cash, and will be presented on the occasion of the 70th State formation day "Kannada Rajyotsava" on 1 November, official sources said.

Announcing the awards, Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi said, 70 awards are being given and all districts have been given representation. This time, 12 women have been selected for the award. While recognising and honouring the talents, social justice has also been ensured, he said.

Zafer Mohiuddin, Prakash Raj, Umashree **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, the government also announced that veteran cinema and theatre actress Umashree has been selected for the Dr Rajkumar Award for lifetime achievement in Kannada cinema. While film director NR Nanjundegowda for the Puttanna Kanagal Award, Richard Castelino has been chosen for the Dr Vishnuvardhan Award.

These three awards carry a cash prize of Rs five lakh each and a 50g gold medal, and they will be presented at the State Film Awards ceremony in Mysuru on 3 November. —*PTI*

'PM2.5 pollution killed 17 lakh in India in 2022'

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Human-caused PM2.5 pollution led to over 17 lakh deaths in India in 2022, a 38 per cent rise since 2010, with fossil fuels responsible for 44 per cent, according to The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change 2025 Report.

Petrol use for road transport caused an estimated 2.69 lakh deaths.

The report estimated India's economic loss from premature deaths due to air pollution at USD 339.4 billion, nearly 9.5 per cent of GDP.

Coal accounted for 46 per cent of India's energy supply and 75 per cent of its electricity generation in 2022, while renewables made up just 10 per cent.

Household pollution from solid biofuels contributed to 113 deaths per one lakh population, largely in rural areas.

Experts warned that India's continued dependence on fossil fuels and inadequate climate adaptation are costing lives and livelihoods.

The country's preparedness for a low-carbon transition fell by two per cent in 2023, the report noted. —*PTI*

Heart, donor lungs arrive in Metro

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

Metro Rail in Bengaluru on Thursday proved itself as the 'lifeline' of the city when it facilitated the safe and rapid transportation of a pair of lungs and a live human heart.

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) said it supported the Sparsh Hospital medical team in the swift and safe transportation of a live human heart and a pair of lungs using the Namma Metro.

The heart was brought to Goraguntepalya Metro Station at 9.34 am and reached Banashankari Metro Station at 10.15 am, covering 17 stations in just 41 minutes, the BMRCL said in a statement.

It added that the lungs were brought to the same station at 10.05 am and reached Bommasandra Metro Station at 11.13 am, after an interchange at RV Road Station, covering 31 stations in one hour and eight minutes.

"Namma Metro facilitated a seamless and time-critical transfer, ensuring the organs reached Aster RV Hospital and Narayana Health City promptly and safely," the statement said.

The operation was efficiently coordinated by officers of the BMRCL Security Department, along with station officials and the medical team, it added.

"BMRCL remains committed to supporting such life-saving missions by providing efficient, reliable, and socially responsible transport solutions in collaboration with medical institutions," the Metro Rail said.

Narayana Health City said, "The use of the Namma Metro enabled swift, congestion-free movement across the city, helping preserve the viability of the organs for transplantation." —*PTI*

GBA dumps garbage at homes of 'litterbugs'

Fines 218 houses ₹2.8L during 'Garbage Dumping Festival'

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The Greater Bengaluru Authority on Thursday launched the 'Garbage Dumping Festival' in which the civic workers dumped garbage in front of 218 households of serial litterers, collecting Rs 2.8 lakh fine from them.

"Waste was deliberately dumped in front of 218 households, and fines amounting to Rs 2.8 lakh were collected," Kare Gowda, Chief Executive Officer of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), said in a statement.

Although waste is collected from every household across all five City corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority by auto-tippers every morning, some residents dump garbage on roadsides, footpaths, and vacant sites, he said.

"To curb this behaviour and maintain urban cleanliness, BSWML has launched this unique awareness campaign, wherein waste is dumped in front of houses of those found littering public spaces, to help residents realise the inconvenience caused when waste is discarded irresponsibly," Gowda said.

Civic authorities said they had video proof of the people who were littering, following which they dumped garbage infront of their houses in the City on Thursday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Gowda said the drive came after strict instructions from Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar to contain the garbage menace.

"Our Marshals have recorded the video of habitual offenders and tracked their homes and also their phone numbers. Now, to discipline such litter bugs, this initiative was initiated. We will counter them with proof of their dirty act of throwing garbage," said Gowda. "Violators will be fined Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000. If the marshals are questioned for such action, they will show the videos recorded earlier to justify the civic agency's action."

Previously, fines ranged between Rs 500 and 2,000. The increase was to dischourage repeat offenders.

He noted that some people avoid handing over garbage to auto-tippers and instead dump it late at night on roads or empty plots. To sensitise such individuals, waste was intentionally placed in front of their houses.

Gowda said 65 waste kiosks are planned to be installed across Bengaluru to curb roadside garbage dumping.

These kiosks will contribute significantly to building a 'Swacch Bengaluru', he said, adding one such kiosk has already been inaugurated in the BTM Layout and has received positive public response.

He also asked people to give segregated waste to the auto-tippers at designated collection times.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

Cabinet clears ₹ 2K cr for City infra development

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The State Cabinet cleared Rs 2,296.57 crore for various development works in Bengaluru, including funds for asphalting roads in the five City corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Briefing reporters about Cabinet decisions, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said that Rs 1,241.57 crore was for a special scheme to provide infrastructure facilities for the GBA. The remaining Rs 1,055 crore would be used for the development of wards and basic infrastructure facilities.

The Cabinet approved an action plan to improve roads.

ASKS CENTRE FOR RS 1,545.23 FLOOD RELIEF

The Cabinet also decided to submit a "recovery and construction" memorandum to the Centre seeking financial assistance of Rs 1,545.23 crore under NDRF to undertake reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by heavy rains and floods during monsoon. Patil said that other than crop loss, more than Rs 5,000 crore worth infrastructure and public property have been damaged.

INTERNAL RESERVATION

The Karnataka government will introduce a law to "effectively implement" internal reservation among Scheduled Castes (SCs), Patil said. A Bill for this purpose is likely to be placed before the Cabinet at its next meeting. The State government has already decided on the formula for the internal split, dividing 17 per cent reservation allocated to 101 SCs into three distinct groups.

CAUVERY IT CELL

Administrative approval was granted to establish a unit named "Cauvery IT Cell" for the Department of Registration and Stamps at a cost of Rs 69.13 crore for five years.

OTHERS

The Cabinet approved Rs 40.12 crore for the development of four ports: Karwar, Old Mangaluru Port - Bengre Side, Old Mangaluru. Consent was given to formulation of separate cadre and recruitment rules for Karnataka State Reserve Police-KSRP and India Reserve Battalion-IRB units. —*Agencies*

Suhas Shetty murder: NIA files chargesheet against 11

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against 11 accused in connection with the murder of Suhas Shetty, who was hacked to death in broad daylight on 1 May.

The chargesheet, submitted before the NIA Special Court in Bengaluru, invokes provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, and the Arms Act 1959.

Investigations revealed that Shetty was targeted as part of a larger terror conspiracy. The accused allegedly tracked his movements for months before staging a car collision to trap him. When Shetty tried to escape on foot, he was chased and killed with swords and machetes.

The NIA identified Abdul Safwan, a former Popular Front of India (PFI) member, as the main conspirator, aided by Niyaz, Mohammed Musamir, Noushad, and Adil Maharoof, who financed the plot.

Others named include Kalandar Shafi, Nagaraja, Ranjith, Rizwan, Azaruddin, and Abdul Khader. The investigation against another accused, Abdul Razak, remains ongoing.

—*Salar News*

2,000 Koppal shelter homes incomplete

KOPPAL, 30 OCT

Upa Lokayukta Justice B Veerappa on Thursday rebuked officials over the incomplete construction of 2,000 shelter homes on the outskirts of Koppal and the poor state of civic infrastructure. During a surprise visit to the site near Chikkasindogi Road, he found the houses surrounded by weeds despite beneficiaries having paid Rs 30,000 each. "If those responsible show such negligence, what can the poor do?" he asked, directing his staff to register a suo motu complaint against the officials. —Salar News

Union minister Khattar praised tunnel road, but assured no funds: DKS

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday said Union Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar praised the tunnel road, flyover, and B-Khata conversion initiatives of the state government during a meeting of urban development ministers of southern states here.

"We have presented before him our demands for the state, but he has not assured any funds," the Deputy CM said in a statement on the meeting.

Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru development portfolio, is locked in a legal and public dispute with BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on the tunnel road project.

Surya is waging a legal battle against the project by appearing on behalf of actor Prakash Belawadi, who has opposed it.

Surya said this "cost-intensive project" worth Rs 43,000 crore will serve no purpose and advocated for public transport.

"That boy is a waste of material and an empty suitcase. He is a waste material. When he is treated with respect and spoken to, he keeps on ranting as much as he can," Shivakumar told reporters in City on Thursday.

He added, "Who is Tejasvi Surya to say that the tunnel road is not needed? He can ban all tunnel projects in the country once he becomes a Union Minister. Out of respect, I gave him time or the meeting, but now he is talking utter nonsense. He does not know how the world works."

BENGALURU-MUMBAI SUPERFAST TRAIN

Surya said he called on Railway Board Chairperson Satish Kumar on Thursday in New Delhi and discussed both the Bengaluru suburban railway project and the proposed Bengaluru-Mumbai superfast train, hinting that it could soon become a reality.

The BJP on Thursday announced that it will stage a protest at Lalbagh in the City on 2 November against the tunnel road project.

The protest will be held under the slogan 'Save Lalbagh, Save Bengaluru', the Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, R Ashoka, said. —*Salar News*

Nothing can stop Satish from being CM: BJP's Ramesh

BELAGAVI/ MYSURU, 30 OCT

Senior BJP legislator Ramesh Jarkiholi has stirred political circles by claiming that "no power can stop (PDW Minister) Satish Jarkiholi from becoming the Chief Minister."

Ramesh, who represents Gokak in Belagavi district and is the eldest of the five politically influential Jarkiholi brothers, made the remark while addressing reporters in Belagavi.

"I am not in the race for the Chief Minister's post. My only goal is to see Satish become CM. Either in this tenure or the next, we will surely make Satish the Chief Minister. No one has the guts to stop him," he declared.

A seven-term MLA — five times from the Congress and twice from the BJP — Ramesh played a key role in bringing down the HD Kumaraswamy-led JDS-Congress coalition government in 2019.

Despite switching sides, Ramesh continues to share a cordial relationship with several Congress leaders. Recently, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah remarked, "Though Ramesh left us, he is from our family."

Ramesh's comments come after Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra said his father should mentor Satish as a successor, a remark made ahead of the "November revolution".

Satish, a senior Congress leader and close associate of Siddaramaiah, has made no secret of his ambition to become Chief Minister after the 2028 Assembly elections. However, Siddaramaiah has recently floated the idea of contesting the 2028 polls himself. —*Salar News*

No trips after 6pm in Bandipur safari

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

State Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has announced the cancellation of the last safari trip beyond 6pm in the Bandipur-Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. In a letter dated 27 October, Khandre responded to complaints from farmer organisations reporting that vehicle lights and noise are driving wild animals out of the forests, thereby threatening crops. Khandre noted, "safari is also an educational experience for environmentalists about wildlife, and it is a livelihood for many." He directed officials to take "urgent action to cut 1 trip" from existing schedules as of 28 October. The Nagarahole National Park, part of a vital conservation hub, hosts diverse wildlife, including the largest herd of Asiatic elephants and numerous bird species —*ANI*

BJP slams KSTDC post promoting Wayanad

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The Opposition BJP has attacked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah after the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) promoted Wayanad, Kerala—Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's constituency—as a tourist destination. The KSTDC's post on 28 October invited travellers to explore Wayanad through a two-night, three-day tour package, prompting sharp criticism from BJP leaders who called it "High Command appeasement." Leader of Opposition R Ashoka accused the CM of prioritising Wayanad over flood-hit areas in North Karnataka, alleging that "Siddaramaiah behaves like Wayanad's District Collector." He said the CM had released crores for Wayanad but delayed compensation to farmers in Kalaburagi, Raichur, Yadgir, and Belagavi. —*PTI*

RSS ROUTE MARCH: KSAT STAYS PDO'S SUSPENSION

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal (KSAT) has stayed the "arbitrary suspension" of a Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) for taking part in an RSS route march, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya said on Thursday.

The Bengaluru South MP, who is also a lawyer by profession, said his office had challenged the suspension of Lungasugur PDO Praveen Kumar in Raichur district.

"KSAT has today stayed the suspension order, which was mechanically passed due to political pressure," he said on X. The stay should serve as a lesson to the Congress government that "no amount of intimidation can deter the nation-building ideals of RSS."

Surya said Senior Advocate Prabhuling Navadgi argued before the KSAT that the suspension was illegal and arbitrary, contending that participation in a private, non-political event on a non-working day could not constitute a violation of service rules.

Reacting to the development, Priyank Kharge wrote on 'X', "Misinterpreting the court directions seems to have become a habit for BJP leaders. The Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal, Kalburagi Bench has only passed an interim order and has not passed any order quashing or setting aside the suspension order of the PDO who participated in RSS rally."

The suspension order will be in abeyance till the final verdict of the case. The tribunal has directed the matter to be listed for final hearing on 14 November with the direction to the State government to file a reply statement, the Minister said. —*PTI*

Govt will give industries land to train youth: Minister

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

The Karnataka government announced will provide land to industries willing to set up skill training laboratories aimed at training and employing the State's youth.

"The government will not only provide land but also bear the entire cost of training for industries that impart skills and ensure employment to our youth. This is our government's firm commitment," Sharanaprakash R Patil, Skill Development, Entrepren eurship, Livelihood and Medical Education Minister, said at the CII Skills Summit 2025 on Thursday.

Patil also proposed a dual apprenticeship programme, combining academic learning with practical, on-the-job training. —*Salar News*

Meet K'buragi officials: HC tells RSS

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday directed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) convenor for Kalaburagi, Ashok Patil, to meet district authorities on 5 November at the Advocate-General's office to discuss the proposed route march in Chittapur town in Kalaburagi district.

The court expressed hope that the meeting would pave the way for a resolution and ordered that the matter be taken up again on 7 November for further proceedings. The march, initially planned for 2 November, has been deferred pending this meeting. —*PTI*

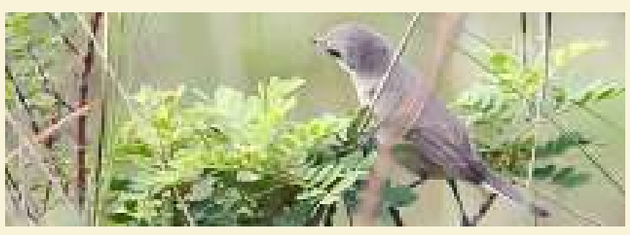
FOR 1ST TIME

Rare Lesser Whitethroat bird spotted in KGF

DEEPTHI R KOLAR
KOLAR GOLD FIELDS, 30 OCT

For the first time ever, the rare Lesser Whitethroat bird was spotted in Kolar a few days ago by Dr Mohan Krishna, an ENT specialist by profession and amateur bird watcher. The European-origin bird is normally found in North Indian regions, such as New Delhi, but is less common in the State.

Classified as a rare bird in India, the Lesser Whitethroat (Curruca curruca) is a small bird with a grey back and head, whitish underparts, and a white throat. It is insectivorous but will also eat berries and soft fruits.



At a meagre length of 11.5 to 13.5cm and a wingspan of 18cm, they are difficult to spot and one needs a specialised magnifying glass to identify them. Instead, bird enthusiasts often identify the species through its scratchy chortling song, which ends with a distinctive rattle.

The bird spends the winter season between October and March in the warmer India and the Africas before returning to Europe in April. Krishna had spotted the Lesser Whitethroat while on a bird watching trip on hillock near a village in the KGF area. He did not believe his eyes at first, so he recorded the bird's call and sent it to experts who confirmed the species.

Krishna said the bird breeds in temperate Europe and in the western and central palearctic regions migrate to Africa, Arabia and parts of India during winter. This was the first time the bird was spotted in Kolar district, he said.

Rare European Bee Eater birds have also been spotted in the KGF region, he said, expecting that many more European Bee Eater birds would flock the bushes in and around Krishnavaram forest area near KGF.

—*Salar News*

Grieving dad's viral post gets 2 cops suspended

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

A police sub-inspector and a constable attached to Bengaluru's Bellandur Police Station have been suspended after a retired BPCL executive alleged harassment and corruption in a social media post that went viral.

Sivakumar K, former Chief Financial Officer of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), shared his ordeal on LinkedIn following the death of his 34-year-old daughter from a brain hemorrhage in September. In his now-deleted post, he wrote that he was forced to pay bribes at every stage for the ambulance, the FIR copy, the cremation, and even for obtaining the death certificate from civic staff. "I had money, I paid. What will the poor do?" he asked, expressing frustration and grief.

The post drew widespread outrage online, with users tagging Bengaluru City Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Whitefield) on 'X', demanding accountability. Responding to the public outcry, the DCP's office announced on Thursday that both the sub-inspector and constable had been immediately suspended. "The Police Department will not tolerate any such indecent or inappropriate behavior under any circumstances," the official statement said. —*PTI*

Bihar polls: NDA to release manifesto on Friday

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will release a joint manifesto for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections on 31 October. All senior leaders of the alliance are expected to be present at the event. NDA includes the Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Dal (United), Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), and Rashtriya Lok Morcha. On 28 October the Mahagathbandhan, led by Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress, released its manifesto titled 'Bihar Ka Tejashwi Pran,' promising to provide government jobs to one member of every family in the state, implement the Old Pension Scheme, putting on hold the Waqf (Amendment) Act and providing financial assistance of Rs 2,500 to women in the state. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

EC launches helpline in WB ahead of SIR

KOLKATA, 30 OCT

The Election Commission has launched voter helpline 1950 to ensure transparency and address concerns during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, stressing that no legitimate voter will be excluded. Tensions rose after Pradeep Kar, 57, from Panihati, allegedly took his own life over fears of being left off the voter list amid confusion about the SIR and NRC. His note reportedly mentioned anxiety over documentation. The TMC, led by MLA Nirmal Ghosh, staged a protest blaming the BJP and Election Commission for creating panic. The EC said multiple help channels, including the National Contact Centre (1800-11-1950) and ECINET app, are in place to address voter grievances. *—PTI*

Maharashtra to get 75-ft Ambedkar statue for Rs 10 cr

LATUR, 30 OCT

The project to construct a 75-foot-tall statue of Dr BR Ambedkar in Maharashtra's Latur has received the approval from the administration along with sanctioned funds of Rs 10 crore, local MLA Abhimanyu Pawar has said. The grand statue will come up at the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Park in the city. The state government had earlier sanctioned the money for the project, but the work could not begin due to the pending administrative approval, Pawar said on Wednesday. An additional Rs 12 crore will however be need to complete the project. "I will keep trying to secure the amount so that the ambitious project can be completed on time," Pawar assured. *—PTI*

Bharat Parv from 1-15 Nov to honour Sardar Patel

PATNA, 30 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that National Unity Day (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas) will be celebrated on 31 October with a grand parade at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, on the lines of the Republic Day Parade. The event will honor Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's legacy and educate youth about his role in integrating 562 princely states. Shah also launched 'Bharat Parv 2025', a fortnight-long national celebration from 1 to 15 November, marking Patel's 150th birth anniversary and concluding on Birsa Munda's birth anniversary.Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take the salute at the parade, featuring women police contingents, cultural performances, and an IAF air show. Shah called the event non-political and said over 2.5 crore people have visited the Statue of Unity so far. *—PTI*

India calls Pak's clash with Afghanistan 'unacceptable'

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

India on Thursday slammed Pakistan for border tensions with Afghanistan, calling it "unacceptable" and reprimanding Pakistan for practising cross-border terrorism with impunity.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Pakistan is "infuriated" with Afghanistan for exercising sovereignty over its own territories.

Pakistan and Afghanistan's relations are worsening following the failure of peace talks held in Turkey. The talks were mediated by Turkey and Qatar, The two countries saw an escalation in border tensions, with both sides trading accusations.

According to Dawn, hostilities began on 11 October, after the Taliban government in Kabul accused Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes inside Afghanistan, an allegation Islamabad has neither confirmed nor denied.

The tensions deepened after Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned the Taliban regime with possible military strikes inside Afghan territory.

- The Taliban government in Kabul accused Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes inside Afghanistan, an allegation Islamabad has neither confirmed nor denied.

Pakistan accuses the Taliban of sheltering militants. The Taliban, however, denies these claims and accuses Pakistan of violating Afghan sovereignty.

India studying US sanctions effect on Russian oil

Meanwhile, India said its crude oil purchases are based on securing energy security from "diverse" sources at affordable prices and it is studying the implications of the latest US sanctions on Russian oil companies Lukoil and Rosneft.

MEA's remarks came amid indications that Indian refiners are reducing procurement of subsidised Russian crude oil and importing petroleum products from the US. Both countries will conclude a trade deal. *—ANI/PTI*

Cong wants to harm RJD's prospects: PM

Says the parties have allied to 'loot' Bihar

CHAPRA, 30 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday claimed that the Congress wants to damage the RJD's prospects in the Bihar assembly elections, and has deployed leaders who have denigrated the state.

He said the relationship between the Congress and RJD was like oil and water, and the two parties have come together to grab power to can "loot" the state.

Addressing election rallies in Muzaffarpur and Chapra, Modi referred to the Opposition coalition's inability to arrive at a proper seat-sharing deal, which has left its constituents pitted against each other in a number of assembly segments.

Without naming Rahul Gandhi, and the INDIA bloc's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav, the PM said, "We are seeing two crown princes (yuvraaj) at work... And both are out on bail."

While Gandhi is out on bail in a defamation case that had led to his disqualification from the Lok Sabha in 2023, Yadav has been named an accused in a land-for-jobs scam, and a Delhi court recently framed charges against him and his family members, including father Lalu Prasad, the RJD president.

Union Minister Chirag Paswan with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public rally in Chhapra in Bihar *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the INDIA bloc will be "wiped out" in Bihar polls as people will "take revenge" for Congress workers allegedly insulting Modi's mother and Rahul Gandhi "deriding" the PM and 'Chhathi Maiyya'.

He claimed that Gandhi insulted 'Chhathi Maiyya' by saying those worshipping the goddess were doing drama.

He also asked the public to vote for Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, as the Prime Minister would make him a "big man" the Assembly polls. *—PTI*

PM can't confront Trump on Pak: RaGa

'One India belongs to Modi, other to people'

NALANDA, 30 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi lacks the courage to confront US President Donald Trump over America's assertion that it stopped the India-Pakistan conflict.

Addressing a rally in Nalanda, Gandhi alleged that Bihar has now become synonymous with paper leaks and poor health infrastructure.

"...Modi was supposed to visit the US... but he is not going because he is scared of Trump," he claimed.

Criticising Home Minister Amit Shah for his comments that "there is no land available in Bihar", Gandhi alleged that "plots were given to an industrial house at throwaway prices" by the state government.

But, corporates "close to Modi cannot provide jobs to the youth of Bihar", the former Congress chief asserted at another rally in Sheikhpura.

The Congress leader said that if the INDIA bloc is voted to power in Bihar, it will be a government of the farmers, labourers, dalits and the weaker sections, with representation from all the communities.

"The world's best university will also come up in Nalanda if we are voted to power," Gandhi added.

LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses the gathering during a rally in Nalanda in Bihar *PHOTO: PTI*

> He is definitely the BJP's 'Chunavi dulha', but for the post of CM he is not the 'dulha' (groom)
>
> -Akhilesh Yadav, Samajwadi Party leader

Gandhi also criticised Modi for reportedly building a separate pool of clean water near the polluted Yamuna river in Delhi, to take a dip during the Chhath Puja.

Claiming there are two Indias, Rahul Gandhi said that while people of Delhi don't get clean water, the same was made available so that PM Modi could take a bath in it.

"One India belongs to people like him and billionaires, Adani and Ambani and on to the people of the country," he claimed. *—ANI/PTI*

BJP moves CEO over Azhar's induction in Telangana cabinet

HYDERABAD, 30 OCT

The BJP on Thursday submitted a memorandum to the Chief Electoral Officer of the state, calling the induction of former cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin into the state's cabinet as violation of model code of conduct, though the MCC is not applicable to the entire city.

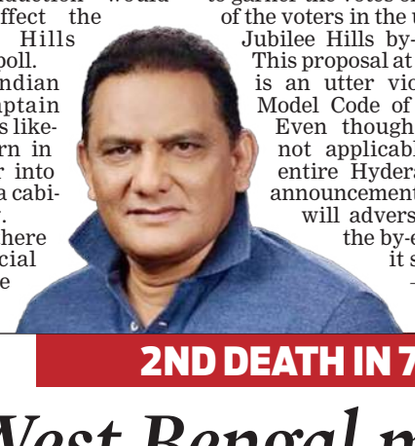
The saffron party also said that his induction would adversely affect the Jubilee Hills Assembly bypoll.

Former Indian cricket captain Azharuddin is likely to be sworn in as a minister into the Telangana cabinet on Friday.

However, there is no official word from the government or the Congress party or the cricketer-turned-politician.

The memorandum, submitted by BJP, said the proposal to induct Azharuddin was made with a malafide intention to woo a section of voters in the segment and sought the CEO to take immediate action to withdraw the "announcement".

"This proposal is nothing but to garner the votes of a section of the voters in the upcoming Jubilee Hills by-elections. This proposal at this stage is an utter violation of Model Code of Conduct. Even though MCC is not applicable to the entire Hyderabad, the announcement if made will adversely affect the by-election ," it said. *—PTI*



Court upholds demolition of Shimla mosque

SHIMLA, 30 OCT

The Shimla district court on Thursday upheld the municipal commissioner court's decision to demolish the entire structure of Sanjauli mosque, rejecting a plea by the Himachal Pradesh Waqf Board and the Sanjauli Mosque Committee.

A court order to demolish three floors of the mosque was being implemented by authorities at the mosque. The Sanjauli Mosque Committee challenged the demolition of the remaining two floors of the five-storey structure in Sanjauli in Shimla.

The court directed to demolish the remaining two floors of the mosque, saying the Waqf Board and the mosque committee were unable to provide valid documents to support their plea.

The Sanjauli Mosque Committee will move the high court against the decision and will also approach the Supreme Court if required.

The commissioner's court had directed the remaining two floors of the mosque be razed, saying the Waqf Board failed to provide records regarding the ownership of the land.

The court had directed the Sanjauli Mosque Committee and the Waqf Board to raze the top three, which were found illegal. *—PTI*

Thackeray cousins, Pawar to lead 1 Nov protest against voters' list irregularities

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

Top leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, including Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar, will lead a protest in Mumbai on 1 November against alleged irregularities in the electoral rolls.

The march, covering 1.5km from Fashion Street to the BMC headquarters, is scheduled between 1pm and 4pm. Anil Parab, a Shiv Sena (UBT) leader, stated that the protest aims to address issues like "vote theft" and discrepancies in voters' lists, ensuring there is no inconvenience for citizens.

Maharashtra Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal expressed support for the protest but refrained from committing to his participation, emphasising that "individual leaders are not important."

He highlighted that cleaning and updating electoral rolls are paramount, noting that around "one crore bogus voters" exist in the state. SEC said that electoral roll updates are being managed well. *—PTI*

China lets Indian firms import rare earth magnets

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

China has granted licences to certain Indian companies to import rare earth magnets, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

China's decision to ease restrictions on supply of rare earth minerals to India came amid efforts by the two sides to normalise the bilateral ties that came under severe strain following the along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Rare earth minerals are considered vital for high-end technology products including electric vehicles, drones, and battery storage.

India has been looking at a steady supply of rare earth minerals to fuel its economic growth.

China accounts for around 70 per cent of global rare earth mining that makes it a very dominant player in the global supply chain of the critical minerals.

China used to export huge quantities of fertiliser to India till 2023.

However, Beijing stopped the supplies to a large number of countries last year. It lifted the restrictions in June but did not relax the norms for resuming exports to India. It announced new restrictions on the export of technologies. *—PTI*

2ND DEATH IN 72 HOURS

West Bengal man dies by suicide over 'SIR stress'

KOLKATA, 30 OCT

A 95-year-old man from West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district allegedly died by suicide in Birbhum after being reportedly distressed over the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, his family claimed on Thursday.

This is the second such death reported in West Bengal in the past 72 hours, following a similar incident at Panihati near Kolkata. A farmer in Cooch Behar, who tried to end his life, is currently admitted to the hospital.

The deceased, Kshitish Majumdar, was found hanging at his daughter's residence in Illambazar area of Birbhum on 29 October.

Family members said Majumdar had been anxious after learning that his name was missing from the 2002 electoral rolls.

Police registered a case of unnatural death case and begun an investigation.

Majumdar's family moved to West Bengal from Bangladesh in 1995 and settled in Paschim Medinipur district. His name was listed on the voter rolls and had exercised his franchise multiple times.

No official statement has yet been issued by the Election Commission (EC) regarding the incident.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned the deaths and the suicide bid allegedly linked to distress over the proposed SIR in the state.

Banerjee said the incidents reflected the "tragic consequences of the BJP's politics of fear, division and hate".

She described the situation as a betrayal of humanity itself and asked, "Who will answer for these avoidable, politically inflicted tragedies? Will the Home Minister accept responsibility? Will the BJP and its allies find the courage to speak out?"

Banerjee urged citizens not to be provoked or take extreme steps. "We will not allow legitimate citizens to be branded as outsiders," she said. *—PTI*

Chabahar Port in Iran *PHOTO: X/PIB*

US waives sanctions for India on Chabahar Port

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The US has granted India a six-month exemption from American sanctions on the Chabahar port in Iran, the External Affairs Ministry (MEA) said on Thursday.

The sanctions were to come into effect from 29 September but following talks between the two sides, an exemption of one month was granted. The fresh exemption of the six-month period will be effective from 29 October.

Last month, the Trump administration announced its decision to revoke the 2018 sanctions waiver with regard to the strategically-located Chabahar port in Iran.

India is a major partner in development of the Chabahar port, located in the Sistan-Balochistan province Iran's southern coast. It is currently operating the Shahid Beheshti terminal at the port.

The US State Department had said that people operating the Chabahar Port and engaging in other related activities will face sanctions under the US Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act. *—PTI*

Sabarimala row accused remanded in judicial custody

PATHANAMTHITTA, 30 OCT

A Ranni court on Thursday remanded Unnikrishnan Potti, the prime accused in the Sabarimala temple gold theft case, to judicial custody after his Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody ended. Produced before the Judicial First Class Magistrate, Potti told the court he had no complaints against the SIT but said he suffered from several ailments and required regular medication. The prosecution assured the court that arrangements would be made for his medical examination and treatment in jail. Potti, accused of stealing gold from the Dwarapalaka idols' gold-coated plates, was shifted to Thiruvananthapuram's Special Jail. The court directed police to produce him again on Monday. Meanwhile, former Sabarimala Administrative Officer B Murari Babu remains in the custody of SIT. *—PTI*

Spitting in public to attract Rs 250 fine in Varanasi

VARANASI, 30 OCT

Spitting in public in Varanasi will now attract a fine of Rs 250 under new sanitation rules introduced by the Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC). Officials said the measures, part of the Uttar Pradesh Solid Waste Management and Sanitation Rules 2021, aim to improve hygiene in the city. Throwing litter or spitting from vehicles will incur a Rs 1,000 penalty, while leaving food for stray animals or storing waste for more than 24 hours will invite fines of Rs 250 and Rs 500 respectively. Pet owners who fail to clean up after their dogs will be charged Rs 500. The highest fine, Rs 5,000, applies to creating unsanitary conditions or allowing stagnation of water, the Varanasi municipal body said. *—PTI*

Elderly dies after 'digital arrest' fraud of Rs 1.2 cr

PUNE, 30 OCT

An 83-year-old retired government official from Pune died of a heart attack weeks after losing Rs 1.2 crore in a 'digital arrest' fraud, police said on Thursday. The victim and his wife were allegedly duped by fraudsters posing as police and CBI officers, who claimed his name had surfaced in a money-laundering case. The scammers kept the couple on a video call for hours, threatening arrest and coercing them to transfer money to several accounts between 16 August and 17 September. The man died last week. His wife later lodged a complaint, and a case has been registered. *—PTI*

Smog chokes Delhi as air quality nears 'severe'

AQI attains 375 mark, pushing capital into the 'Red Zone'

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Delhi's air quality plunged into the red zone on Thursday as the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) rose to 375, inching towards the 'severe' category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

A thick blanket of haze and smog reduced visibility across the capital, with PM2.5 levels at 184.4 and PM10 at 301.9, both considered hazardous.

Several areas, including Vivek Vihar (426), Anand Vihar (415), Ashok Vihar (414), Wazirpur (419) and Sonia Vihar (406), recorded severe air quality. The AQI spiked from 279 a day earlier, trapping pollutants under calm winds below 10kmph.

The Air Quality Early Warning System reported a ventilation index below the favourable mark of 6,000 m²/s, indicating the atmosphere's weak capacity to disperse pollutants.

The India Meteorological Department recorded visibility of 1,000 metres at Palam and 800 metres at Safdarjung, where calm wind and 90 per cent humidity worsened conditions.

Environmentalists said the yellowish morning haze was smog, a mix of fog and pollution, posing serious health risks for vulnerable groups.

The IMD predicted a cloudy sky with light drizzle later in the day.

According to CPCB norms, an AQI between 301 and 400 is 'very poor' and 401 to 500 is 'severe.'

The minimum temperature stood at 20.1°C, four notches above normal, with a high expected near 30°C. *—PTI*

A layer of smog engulfs the city after air quality deteriorated in Delhi-NCR and Noida area *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Cloud seeding is an SOS measure, not harmful for the humans and environment. The real solution lies in controlling pollution at the source.**
>
> -Manindra Agarwal, Director, IIT-Kanpur

RS 5,265 CR LOSS TO ANDHRA

People in low-lying areas should stay alert and avoid the river, Andhra Disaster Management chief warns *PHOTO: PTI*

Cyclone Montha swells Krishna river, flood alert issued

AMARAVATI, 30 OCT

Heavy rain from Cyclone Montha swelled the Krishna River, flooding parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and damaging infrastructure and crops.

Andhra Pradesh Disaster Management Authority chief Prakhar Jain said inflow at the Prakasam Barrage reached 2.74 lakh cusecs, matching the discharge downstream. "People in low-lying areas should stay alert and avoid the river," he warned, noting flows could peak at 5 lakh cusecs.

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand said over 11,000 power staff were deployed to restore supply amid flooding. In Telangana, Minister Konda Surekha said Warangal and nearby districts were inundated, with NDRF and local teams rescuing stranded residents using boats and drones.

CM N Chandrababu Naidu said 15 people trapped in a Bapatla church were saved by locals and rescue teams. The cyclone, now a low-pressure system, continues to bring heavy rain to Bengal and MP.

Andhra incurred loss over Rs 5K crore due to 'Montha'

Naidu pegged Andhra Pradesh's losses at Rs 5,265 crore, mainly in roads, agriculture, and fisheries. *—PTI*

SC: Cause of fire not relevant in insurance

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the cause of a blaze is immaterial unless the insured is responsible, holding that accidental fires are covered under insurance policies.

Upholding Orion Conmerx Pvt Ltd's claim against National Insurance Co Ltd, a bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan said, "Once loss is due to fire and there is no allegation of fraud, the cause of fire is immaterial and presumed accidental."

The court termed fire insurance a "strategic tool for risk management and economic resilience," adding that its purpose is to cushion financial losses, not prevent fires.

It dismissed the insurer's appeal, calling the repudiation "arbitrary" and "perverse," and ordered Orion to be compensated with interest.

The 2010 blaze at Orion's premises led to a dispute over policy interpretation, which the top court settled in the firm's favour. *—PTI*

Study: Rare bacteria spiking whooping cough-like cases

CHANDIGARH, 30 OCT

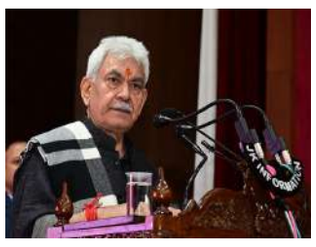
Researchers at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) have reported a surge in infections caused by 'Bordetella Holmesii,' a lesser-known bacterium that mimics whooping cough in northern India.

The study, published in the US-based journal Emerging Infectious Diseases, analysed 935 suspected pertussis cases and found that B Holmesii accounted for nearly 37 per cent, surpassing the once-dominant B Pertussis. The rise was most pronounced in 2023 among children aged five to 10.

PGIMER's surveillance data show B Pertussis infections dropped from 15–20 per cent to 2–5 per cent, while B Holmesii infections rose sharply. Researchers said this shift indicates an evolving pattern of respiratory illnesses resembling pertussis.

The long-term study, led by Dr Vikas Gautam's team in collaboration with CSIR-IMTECH, highlights PGIMER's role in tracking emerging pathogens after its earlier discovery of a new bacterium causing sepsis. *—PTI*

- B Pertussis infections dropped to 2–5 per cent, while B Holmesii infections rose sharply, indicating an evolving pattern of respiratory illnesses liking pertussis



Two J&K teachers sacked over alleged terror links

SRINAGAR, 30 OCT

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday dismissed two government teachers for alleged links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit.

Officials said Ghulam Hussain and Majid Iqbal Dar were terminated under Article 311 of the Constitution after investigations found them working as over ground workers, aiding recruitment and funding terror activities.

Hussain was accused of handling LeT funds in Reasi, while Dar allegedly used drug money to finance terror operations and was linked to an IED recovery in Rajouri in 2023.

The administration said the action reflected its 'zero-tolerance' policy towards terrorism, noting that around 80 employees have been dismissed in the past five years.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti condemned the move, claiming it "fuels concerns of a wider agenda to disempower Muslims, especially Kashmiris," and that employees were being denied the chance to prove their innocence. *—PTI*

HC clears Manjrekar film, says no monopoly on 'Shivaji' name

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

The Bombay High Court has cleared the release of Mahesh Manjrekar's new Marathi film Punha Shivaji Raje Bhosale, ruling that the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in any form cannot be the subject of exclusivity.

A vacation bench of Justice Amit Jamsandekar dismissed a plea by Everest Entertainment LLP, which alleged copyright infringement and sought to block the film's release.

The court said Everest's claims over the film's title, script and dialogues were "baseless and unsustainable", adding that common Marathi expressions cannot attract copyright protection.

It also observed that Punha Shivaji Raje Bhosale is a new and distinct work, unlikely to mislead audiences.

Criticising Everest for its gross and inordinate delay in filing the petition, Justice Jamsandekar said the move appeared "calculated" to pressure the filmmakers. The court refused any stay, allowing the film to release on Friday as planned. *—PTI*

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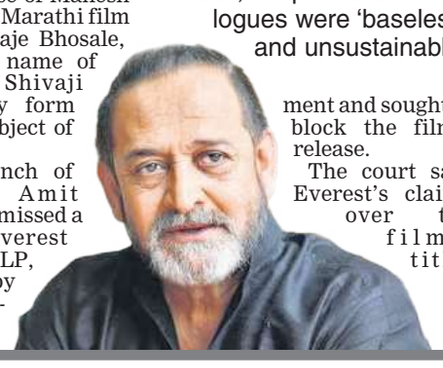


EXECUTED 'REGIME CHANGE OP'

Delhi cops oppose bail of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The Delhi Police on Thursday opposed bail pleas of activists **Umar Khalid**, **Sharjeel Imam** and others in the 2020 Delhi riots case, alleging a conspiracy to destabilise the state through a "regime change operation" disguised as peaceful protest.

In an affidavit to the Supreme Court, police said the accused conspired to incite communal violence during then US President Donald Trump's visit to draw global attention to anti-CAA protests. Citing extensive evidence, it said the offences warranted "jail, not bail." The pleas will be heard Friday by a bench comprising two judges led by Justice Aravind Kumar. *—PTI*

FACE FIRST AT US BORDERS!

WHAT INDIANS SHOULD KNOW

Starting December 2025, the United States will make biometric screening, including photographs and facial scans, mandatory for all non-citizens, even Green Card holders, at every entry and exit point. Officials say it will tighten border security, but critics warn it could expand government surveillance and threaten privacy rights.

1. WHAT'S CHANGING?

From 26 December 2025, every non-US citizen, including Green Card holder, must be photographed when entering and leaving the US.

- The rule ends age exemptions (previously under 14 and above 79).
- May soon include fingerprints and facial scans at airports, seaports, and land borders.
- Data collected will be verified using facial comparison technology.
- Implemented by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

2. HOW WILL IT BE DONE?

- Photos and biometric data will be taken at entry and exit points.

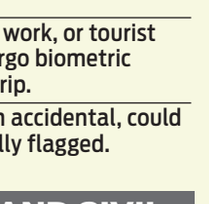
Information will be matched with passport and visa data.

- AI-based facial recognition will confirm traveller identities.

The system aims to detect visa overstays, document fraud, and potential threats.

3. WHY IT MATTERS FOR INDIANS

- India sends one of the largest groups of immigrants and students to the US.
- Over 1.3 million Indian-origin Green Card holders may now face stricter checks.
- Indians on student, work, or tourist visas will also undergo biometric screening at every trip.
- Visa overstays, even accidental, could now be automatically flagged.



4. PRIVACY AND CIVIL RIGHTS CONCERNS

Facial recognition has a higher error rate for darker skin tones, say civil rights groups.

- The ACLU warns of a perpetual surveillance state.
- The US Commission on Civil Rights (2024) found it misidentifies minorities more frequently.
- Critics fear data misuse and lack of transparency in cross-border sharing.

5. THE NUMBERS BEHIND IT

42 per cent of undocumented immigrants in the US are visa overstays (Congressional Research Service, 2023).

- DHS claims the system will close long-standing tracking gaps.
- Full rollout expected at all US airports and seaports within 3 to 5 years.

6. WHICH OTHER NATIONS USE BIOMETRICS?

- **The United Kingdom:** Facial and fingerprint scans for all non-citizens.
- **European Union:** Rolling out Entry/Exit System (EES) in 2025 for third-country nationals.
- **Canada & Australia:** Use facial recognition for e-passport holders.
- **China:** Full biometric data for foreigners upon arrival and departure.

7. KEY TAKEAWAY FOR INDIANS

- Frequent Indian travellers, students, and Green Card holders should expect longer immigration checks, mandatory biometric scans, and greater digital scrutiny from December 2025 onward.

RESEARCH: AMOL D MISHRA; DESIGN: R. SURENDHAR

PUSHKAR FAIR

People take part in an event during the annual Pushkar Camel Fair 2025, in Ajmer district, Rajasthan, Thursday. This fair attracts at least 2 lakh people. Apart from being one of India's largest camel and cattle fairs, it is also an important pilgrimage season for Hindus to the Pushkar Lake. A horse worth Rs 15 crore and a buffalo worth Rs 23 crore are the star attractions. ***PHOTO: PTI***

It's not too late to fight global warming

Climate change has been on the world's radar for decades. Predictions made by scientists at oil giant Exxon in the early 1980s are proving accurate. The damage done by a hotter, more chaotic world is worsening and getting more expensive.

Even so, many countries around the world are failing to meet their emissions targets, with major gaps found even this week between the commitments and actions needed to hold global warming to 1.5°C.

This has put Earth on a dangerous path, as our new report on the state of the climate reveals.

Last year was likely the hottest in at least 1,25,000 years ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Earth's vital signs are ailing

Last year was the hottest on record. It was also likely the hottest in at least 125,000 years.

Every year, we track 34 of the planet's vital signs. In 2024, 22 of these indicators were at record levels. Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and ocean heat both hit new highs, as did losses of trees to fire.

Meat consumption kept rising, and fossil fuel consumption reached new heights.

The consequences of climate inaction are ever clearer. In 2024, the world's coral reefs suffered the most widespread bleaching ever recorded, affecting roughly 84 per cent of the world's coral reef area between January 2023 and May 2025.

Greenland and Antarctic ice mass fell to record lows. Deadly and costly disasters surged, including the flooding in Texas, which killed at least 135 people, while the Los Angeles wildfires have cost more than AUD 380 billion.

Since 2000, global climate-linked disasters have caused more than USD 27 trillion in damages.

Stories and statistics like this are sadly not new. Many other reports and warnings have been published before we started this annual snapshot in 2020. Therefore, our report this year focuses on three high-impact types of climate action, across energy, nature and food.

Energy

Combined solar and wind consumption set a new record in 2024, but is still 31 times lower than fossil fuel (oil, coal, gas) energy consumption. This is despite the fact that renewables are now the cheapest choice for new energy almost everywhere. One reason for this is the ongoing subsidies for fossil fuels.

By 2050, solar and wind energy could supply nearly 70 per cent of global electricity. But this transition requires restricting the influence of the fossil fuel industry and a full phase out of fossil fuel production and use, not the expansion we continue to see globally.

As a result of surging fossil fuel consumption, energy-related emissions rose 1.3 per cent in 2024 and reached an all-time high of 40.8 gigatons (Gt) of carbon dioxide equivalent.

In 2024, the greatest fossil fuel greenhouse gas emitters were China (30.7 per cent of total), the United States (12.5 per cent), India (8.0 per cent), the European Union (6.1 per cent), and Russia (5.5 per cent). Together, they accounted for 62.8 per cent of global emissions.

Sadly, much of the rise in fossil fuel electricity generation may be due to hotter temperatures and heat waves.

Nature

Protecting and restoring ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, mangroves and peatlands could remove or avoid around 10 Gt of carbon dioxide emissions per year by 2050, which is equivalent to roughly 25 per cent of current annual emissions.

But we must also stop destroying what we have. Global tree cover loss was almost 30 million hectares in 2024, the second-highest area on record and a 4.7 per cent increase over 2023.

Tropical primary forest losses were particularly large in 2024, with fire-related losses reaching a record high of 3.2 million hectares, up from just 690 thousand hectares in 2023, a 370 per cent increase.

Food

Approximately 30 per cent of food is lost or wasted globally. Reducing food waste could greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions since it accounts for roughly 8–10 per cent of global emissions. Policies supporting plant-rich diets could also help slow climate change, while offering many benefits related to human health, food security, and biodiversity.

The technical mitigation potential associated with switching away from eating meat may be in the order of 0.7–8.0 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year by 2050.

This is in part because methane emissions from cows, sheep and other ruminant livestock account for roughly half of all agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. Per capita meat consumption hit an all-time high in 2024, and we currently add 500,000 more ruminants per week.

Creating global change

In our report, we note that social tipping points can trigger climate action. These refer to moments when a small, committed minority triggers a rapid and large-scale shift in social norms, beliefs, or behaviours.

Research shows sustained, nonviolent movements and protests involving just a small proportion of a population (about 3.5 per cent) can help trigger transformative change. But it also suggests that as awareness grows and people see their values reflected in others, the conditions for social tipping points may be strengthened.

Reaching this positive tipping point will require more than policy. It will take connection, courage, and collective resolve. Climate mitigation strategies are available, cost-effective and urgently needed, and we can still limit warming if we act boldly and quickly, but the window is closing. *—The Conversation*

SALAR ساہر

'Sewer socialism' could make Mamdani NY mayor

Democratic candidate for mayor of New York City Zohran Mamdani looks increasingly like the one to beat at next week's election. But he is up against more than the usual political challenges.

US President Donald Trump has referred to him as "my little communist" and called his nomination "a rebellion". More recently there have been calls for Mamdani's citizenship to be investigated.

Born in Uganda, and the first Muslim nominee for mayor of the biggest city in the US, the 34-year-old Mamdani is an obvious target. But it is his stance as a democratic socialist that has really invited the old-school "red-baiting", aimed at discrediting him by invoking Cold War anxieties.

In fact, Mamdani's approach to democratic socialism is less about an abstract political ideology than it is about practical solutions. As he has put it: "We want to showcase our ideals, not by lecturing people about how correct we are, but rather by delivering and letting that delivery be the argument itself."

Because of this, he has also been described as an heir to the historical tradition of "sewer socialism", a brand of left-wing thinking that favoured incremental, practical reform over revolutionary rhetoric.

At 34, Zohran Mamdani is the first Muslim nominee for mayor of US' biggest city ***PHOTO: X***

- Zohran Mamdani's approach to democratic socialism is less about an abstract political ideology than it is about practical solutions. As he has put it: "We want to showcase our ideals, not by lecturing people about how correct we are, but rather by delivering."

Delivering tangible results

Despite the long history of anticommunism in the US, Milwaukee in Wisconsin was the nation's socialist capital for decades.

A succession of socialist mayors focused on delivering basic services to the people of the city. Socialist candidates dominated city politics there for 50 years, from 1910 to 1960. It was the most successful political achievement for socialism in US history, largely because it appealed to the mainly German immigrant population.

The term "sewer socialist" was actually first used derisively by Morris Hillquit, national chairman of the Socialist Party, who ran unsuccessfully for mayor of New York several times.

At the 1932 party convention in Milwaukee, Hillquit was almost replaced as leader by local mayor Daniel Hoan. Mayor from 1916 to 1940, Hoan was justifiably proud of the city-owned sewer system. But he also established one of the first public bus systems in America, and built the country's first public housing project.

This repeated success in city politics – despite the national opposition to socialism and Hillquitt's "sewer socialist" slight – was built on delivering tangible results to the voters.

And it's that approach that is seeing sewer socialism making a comeback, as urban dwellers face an affordability crisis and declining quality of life.

Mamdani is not the only millennial socialist candidate running for mayor.

In Seattle, over on the US west coast, 43-year-old Katie Wilson is a strong contender in a tight race with the incumbent mayor, 67-year-old Bruce Harell. Wilson is the founder of the local Transit Riders Union and has expanded her progressive activism to social housing, public safety and homelessness.

She doesn't see the socialist label as a major issue on the campaign.

Like Wilson, Mamdani lacks the experience of his opponent, former New York governor Andrew Cuomo (67).

Cuomo played on this in the final debate of the campaign, telling the young challenger, "the issue is your lack of experience". Mamdani replied that his opponents "speak only in the past because that is all they know".

Perhaps inevitably, some are saying Mamdani's ability to connect with voters not only promises to deliver an improved quality of city life, but may also make him a viable presidential candidate who could "save" the Democratic Party in 2028.

Speaking on the 4th of July, Mamdani said: "America is beautiful, contradictory, unfinished, I am proud of our country even as we constantly strive to make it better."

Vice President JD Vance responded the next day: "There is no gratitude here […] We should demand that our people, whether first or tenth generation Americans, have gratitude for this country."

But it might have been Fiorello La Guardia, mayor of New York during the Depression, who best described how such a turnaround could have happened: "There is no Republican or Democratic way to pick up the garbage."

In other words, basic municipal services don't depend on party politics. And if neither major party cares enough about those essential quality of life issues to actually deliver, maybe a younger "sewer socialist" will be the one to pick up the trash. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

'China controls 90% of global rare earth supply, can weaponise it'

Ajai Chowdhry, Co-Founder of HCL and Chairman of the National Quantum Mission, has warned that China's dominance over rare earth elements poses a serious strategic risk to global manufacturing, including India's ambitions in electric vehicles (EVs) and advanced technologies.

Speaking to ANI, Padma Bhushan awardee Chowdhry highlighted how China has systematically gained control over critical minerals over the past decade and a half.

"Rare earths are absolutely essential for many, many products. EVs, for example, and batteries, all these products use rare earth. What China did in the last 10 or 15 years: they started sourcing from all over the world and bought over the mines. So today, 90 per cent of the world's rare earths are controlled by them, and they can be weaponised. So if they don't supply rare earth, a lot of our products cannot be developed, whether they're in India and America or Europe," Chowdhry said.

He pointed out that recent Chinese export restrictions on rare earths have already triggered strong reactions from the United States.

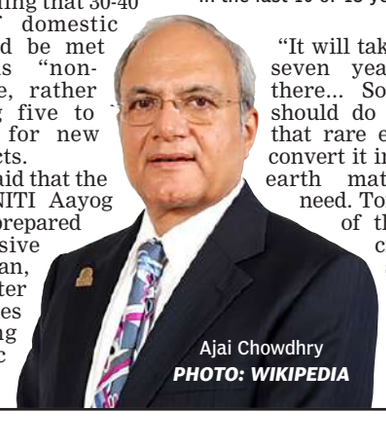
"Now, because they decided to propose serious exports of rare earth, America has put in a 100 per cent extra duty. Now, what should we do?" he said.

Chowdhry acknowledged the environmental and operational challenges of rare earth mining, which he described as "a very dirty job."

"Rare earth mining is a very dirty job. It creates a lot of... a lot of stuff that is not good for health. So mining is a very tough job. So that's part one of that. But of course, in China, it doesn't matter. Nobody gets to know. In any case, they can manage that. We can't. The second thing is that we have never thought about it earlier as a country. So we are pretty late in this," he added.

Chowdhry proposed an immediate solution to India's rare-earth dependency by extracting critical minerals from the country's growing e-waste, claiming that 30-40 per cent of domestic demand could be met through this "non-mined" route, rather than waiting five to seven years for new mining projects.

HCL Co-Founder Ajai Chowdhry says rare earths are essential for products such as batteries. What China did in the last 10 or 15 years is they started sourcing from all over the world and bought mines ***PHOTO: PTI***



Ajai Chowdhry ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

He further said that the Centre and NITI Aayog have already prepared a comprehensive rare-earth plan, but the faster alternative lies in recycling electronic scrap.

"It will take us five to seven years to get there... So what we should do is take all that rare e-waste and convert it into the rare earth materials we need. Tons and tons of that can be created," he said.

He added, "I've given a paper, working together with a person who's actually researched it. And I've given that paper to NITI Aayog."

"I can't say it's going to replace everything but... let us say 30% or 40% of our requirement can be met just from e-waste," he said.

'India must ban dangerous Chinese chips'

He alleged that chips, CCTVs, and even Biometric Attendance Systems (BAC) can transmit Indian data back to China, posing serious threats to national security and local data protection.

Chowdhry, who has served on various government committees since 1999 and is currently the Chairman of the National Quantum Mission, called for a ban on the import of Chinese chips, alleging that each piece of hardware has a 'backdoor' to enable secret data transmission abroad.

India does 'screwdriver jobs'

He further criticised India having what he called 'screwdriver jobs', saying that smartphones are getting manufactured in China and then assembly kits are sent to India to complete the smartphones.

"You know what happens: when an Apple or Samsung phone is made in India, the kits come from China. They are screwdrivered and sent," he said. This idea of 'screwdriver jobs' also extends to drone manufacturing, as India currently only assembles drones sent here. He pointed out that with drone manufacturing, Chinese products are masked by being labelled as from Singapore.

'Govt offices compromised'

"Every product that you see around you today is Chinese chips. Two years ago, actually, if you remember, when (Prime Minister) Modi came in, he said, I want an attendance machine in every central government office...Two years ago, an intelligence agency was asked to look at them. And they found that all the data had gone back to China. What does that mean? All central government officers and their wives, and everyone whose name was on that attendance machine, have gone back to China. And the same is true for CCTVs. All CCTVs all over the country, every street, everything is known to the Chinese today because every CCTV has Chinese chips. So it's a very serious situation," Chowdhry said.

The idea of banning chips has already been recommended to the Central government, and will also help build Indian industries, he said.

Colloquially known as the 'Father of Indian Hardware' for helping propel the indigenous hardware industry in the late 1970s, he called for following the footsteps of the US and Europe in banning CCTVs with Chinese chips, and encouraging domestic production instead.

In 2024, certain media reports stated that Intelligence agencies were probing the possibility of a breach of Biometric Attendance Systems (BAS) in thousands of government offices after it was found that companies that supplied the systems had used Chinese-origin parts. However, no official government report has been released, and the claims have not been substantiated.

'Product-oriented economy'

The HCL co-founder stressed the need to shift from a service-oriented to a product-oriented economy, as this will help employ engineers and scientists, including giving diaspora Indians opportunities to contribute to India. *—ANI*

PHOTO: ANI

Vance hopes Usha will embrace Christianity

WASHINGTON, 30 OCT

During a Turning Point USA Event in Mississippi, US Vice President JD Vance openly expressed his desire for his wife, Usha Vance, raised in a Hindu family, to embrace Christianity. Responding to a question about his hopes for her faith journey, he stated, "Do I hope, eventually, that she is somehow moved by the same thing that I was moved by in church? Yeah, I honestly do wish that." However, he emphasised that belief is personal and respects her free will, adding, "If she doesn't, then God says everybody has free will." Vance, a convert to Catholicism in 2019, shared their interfaith approach, noting they are raising their children in the Christian faith. *—ANI*

US strikes 'drug' boat in Pacific, kills all 4

WASHINGTON, 30 OCT

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced on Wednesday that US military forces conducted a strike on a vessel allegedly transporting drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, resulting in the deaths of all four individuals aboard. Hegseth claimed in a social media post that intelligence indicated the boat was "transiting along a known narco-trafficking route, and carrying narcotics." The strike, executed in international waters, reportedly left US forces unharmed. A video shared by Hegseth depicted the boat exploding in flames and smoke. The Trump administration's ongoing campaign against drug cartels has raised speculation about its potential political motives, particularly regarding Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, without presenting evidence linking the struck boats to narcotics trafficking. *—PTI*

China aims for human moon landing by 2030

JIUQUAN, 30 OCT

China on Thursday announced it is on track to land astronauts on the moon by 2030, as it introduced the latest crew destined for its Tiangong space station. "Currently, each programme of the research and development work of putting a person on the moon is progressing smoothly," stated Zhang Jingbo, spokesman for the China Manned Space Programme. Preparations include the Long March 10 rocket and moon landing suits. The upcoming crew, comprising Zhang Lu, Wu Fei, and Zhang Hongzhang, will launch from Jiuquan on Friday at 11.44pm. They will also take four mice to study the effects of weightlessness. This follows China's exclusion from the International Space Station over US national security concerns. *—PTI*

Pakistan security forces kill 18 in Balochistan

KARACHI, 30 OCT

Pakistan security forces killed 18 terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations (IBO) in restive Balochistan province, the army said on Thursday. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army, said that two separate intelligence-based operations were conducted in the Chiltan mountain range of Quetta district and Buleda in Kech district on Wednesday night. Terrorists exchanged fire after being engaged by security forces at their hideouts, the statement said. "After an intense fire exchange, 14 terrorists were killed in Chiltan and another four in Kech," it said. "Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists." *—PTI*

Trump, Xi pledge cooperation to end Russia-Ukraine war

Leaders talk peace efforts and global stability at APEC summit

WASHINGTON, 30 OCT

US President Donald Trump said he spoke about the Russia-Ukraine war during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in South Korea.

Trump said they discussed the conflict in Ukraine at length during their 100-minute meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

"We're both going to work together to see if we can get something done," Trump told press aboard his Air Force One. "The sides are locked in and fighting, and sometimes you've got to let them fight."

"He[Xi] has been buying oil from Russia for a long time, and it takes care of a big part of China ... But with him we did not discuss the oil. We discussed working together to get this war finished. It does not affect China; it does not affect us. But I don't like to see thousands of young men killed," Trump said.

China is the largest buyer of Russian oil. Trump has repeatedly targeted India for purchasing Russian oil and fuelling Moscow's "war machine".

However, Trump's optimism didn't necessarily carry through with Xi.

Trump had told the APEC summit that China didn't have a role in brokering a ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia after border skirmishes killed dozens.

Trump claimed to have been the chief peacemaker between the two nations.

Xi said that he appreciated Trump's "great contribution to the recent conclusion of the Gaza ceasefire agreement" but told Trump that Beijing had been helping the two Southeast Asian neighbours to settle their border dispute "in our own way", the South China Morning Post reported.

(China's export curb) is absolutely unheard of in International Trade, and a moral disgrace in dealing with other Nations

-Donald Trump, US President

Previous insults

The world must never return to the law of the jungle, where the strong prey on the weak

-Xi Jinping, Chinese President

FENTANYL WOES

Trump said Xi agreed to take concrete steps to curb the flow of fentanyl precursors. "He's going to work very hard to stop the death that's coming in," Trump said. "It's complex because fentanyl is used for lots of different reasons, including anaesthetics, but I think you're going to see some real action taken."

The US has seen rapid increases in the number of drug overdoses over the last two decades. Drug overdose deaths rose by 500 per cent between 1999 and 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, a large percentage of the drugs come from parts of the Americas.

—Salar News with Agencies

US Senate votes to revoke tariffs on Canada

The US Senate on Wednesday voted 50-46 to revoke Trump's authority to impose steep tariffs on Canada. Trump recently raised tariffs on the country by an additional 10 per cent above the existing 35 per cent over a television ad featuring former US president Ronald Reagan that criticised his trade policies.

1ST TIME IN 3 DECADES

Will resume testing N-weapons: Trump

BUSAN, 30 OCT

In what seems to be a significant change in US foreign policy President Donald Trump has suggested the US will resume testing nuclear weapons for the first time in three decades on an "equal basis" with Russia and China.

The announcement was made on social media minutes before he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday in South Korea.

However, there is no indication that the US would start detonating warheads, but the President offered few details about what seemed to be a significant shift in policy.

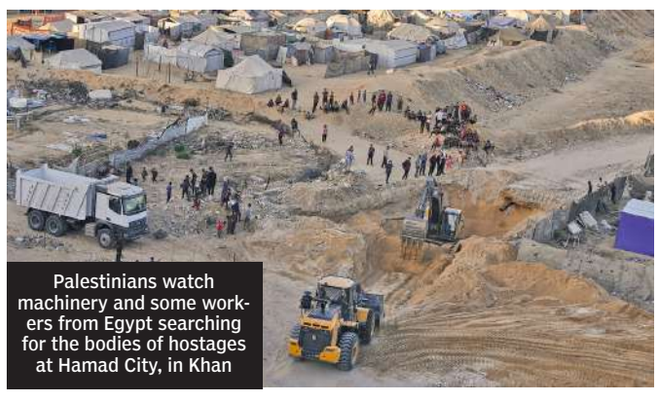
The US military already regularly tests its missiles that are capable of delivering a nuclear warhead, but it has not detonated the weapons since 1992 because of a test ban.

The president suggested that changes were necessary because other countries were testing weapons. It was unclear what he was referring to, but it evoked Cold War-era escalations. "Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis," he said in a post on Truth Social. "That process will begin immediately."

The White House and the Pentagon did not immediately respond to questions seeking more details, and Trump ignored a question from a reporter about his post as he sat face-to-face with Xi in Busan.

US WILL SHARE NUKE TECH WITH SOUTH KOREA

President Trump said the US will share closely held technology to allow South Korea to build a nuclear-powered submarine. *—PTI*



Palestinians watch machinery and some workers from Egypt searching for the bodies of hostages at Hamad City, in Khan

ISRAEL HAS ERECTED NEARLY 1,000 BARRIERS IN WEST BANK

SINJIL, 30 OCT

Israel has erected nearly 1,000 new barriers across the occupied West Bank over the past two years, severely restricting Palestinian movement, a local government body said.

The Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission reported 916 gates, walls and checkpoints installed since the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel.

Residents say the scale of new restrictions is unprecedented since Israel captured the territory in 1967.

Military raids have also intensified, with Palestinians killed or detained.

Israel says the objective of the operations is to root out militants.

Many metal gates now block entrances of the village and city routes, often manned by soldiers. *—PTI*

Russia strikes cause power outages in Ukraine, kill 2

KYIV, 30 OCT

A sustained Russian barrage of drones and missiles struck Ukraine's energy grid on Thursday.

The attack caused widespread power cuts and outages across several regions.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal condemned it as "systematic energy terror."

At least two people were killed and 17 sustained injuries, including children, as Russia launched over 650 drones and 50 missiles, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

The strikes, intensifying with the approach of winter, crippled water, heating and sewage systems dependent on electricity, leaving thousands without essential services amid freezing temperatures and growing humanitarian concerns.

The drone and missile strikes, crippled water, heating and sewage systems, leaving thousands without essential services ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Moscow's forces had encircled Ukrainian troops in Pokrovsk and Kupiansk, but Kyiv dismissed the statement as false propaganda.

Putin said journalists would be allowed "to see what's going on." *—PTI*

Hurricane Melissa batters Cuba, Haiti

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, 30 OCT

Hurricane Melissa has devastated Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica, leaving dozens dead and causing widespread destruction across the Caribbean.

In Jamaica, where it made landfall as a Category 5 storm, over 25,000 people sought shelter and 77 per cent of the island lost power. "Recovery will take time, but the government is fully mobilised," said Prime Minister Andrew Holness, adding that emergency services are working round the clock.

At least 25 people died in Haiti, where Petit-Goâve suffered major damage, with families lacking food and medical aid. "People have lost everything," said local lawyer Charly Saint-Vil.

In Cuba's Santiago de Cuba province, debris filled streets as 735,000 people took refuge in shelters. The US is deploying disaster relief teams to assist affected nations. *—PTI*

Sudan chief promises probe into RSF crimes

CAIRO, 30 OCT

The leader of Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced that that the group would investigate "violations" committed by the group when it captured el-Faher in the Darfur region.

Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti's announcement came after reports of mass civilian killings and executions after RSF seized the city on Sunday. Groups allied with the Sudan army said that at least 2,000 civilians had been killed while the UN said that the RSF killed 460 people, including patients in a hospital.

Hemedti admitted there had been violations by his forces, which would be investigated by a committee that has now arrived in the city.

Meanwhile, activists have also stepped-up demands for international pressure on the UAE, which is accused of providing military support to the RSF, while a report by The Guardian claims that the British military weapons were used by the paramilitary group. *—Agencies*

- Groups allied with the Sudan army said that at least 2,000 civilians had been killed while the UN said that the RSF killed 460 people, including patients

Satellite image from a Yale group tracking the Sudan war shows piles of bodies in el-Fasher in Sudan after the paramilitary RSF seized the city after a 500-day siege, revealing the extent of the atrocities

PHOTO: X @HRL_YaleSPH

Netherlands likely to get 1st gay PM

THE HAGUE, 30 OCT

The centrist D66 party made major gains in Dutch elections, positioning itself to lead the next government as far-right leader Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV) lost support.

With 98 per cent of votes counted, both D66 and PVV were projected to secure 26 seats in the 150-member lower house.

The results mark a steep fall for Wilders, dubbed the "Dutch Trump," from his 2023 peak.

D66 leader Rob Jetten, 38, is set to become the Netherlands' youngest and first openly gay prime minister. *—Agencies*

RESULT OF COORDINATED RAIDS

Five new suspects arrested in Louvre theft

PARIS, 30 OCT

French authorities have arrested five more suspects in the €88 million Louvre jewellery heist, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccuau said on Thursday. The arrests followed coordinated raids across the Paris region on Wednesday night.

One suspect is believed to be part of the four-man team captured on CCTV during the 19 October theft, in which jewels were stolen from the museum in just four minutes.

Two others had already been detained and "partially recognised" their involvement, while one member remains at large.

Beccuau said the new suspects "may eventually inform us about how the incident took place."

Raids in Seine-Saint-Denis uncovered phones containing encrypted messages. Authorities said the detainees can be held for up to four days before charges are filed.

DNA from one suspect may link him to the scene. "We had him in our sights," Beccuau noted.

The prosecutor added that the arrests stemmed from "other elements of the case," not earlier testimonies.

Following the heist, security at French cultural institutions has been tightened, and some jewels have been moved to the Bank of France for safekeeping. *—Agencies*

Following the heist, security at French cultural institutions has been tightened. Some jewels moved to the Bank of France for safekeeping ***PHOTO: X***

Canadian man pees on Indian's car, then kills him

OTTAWA, 30 OCT

An Indian-origin businessman was killed in a vicious attack after he confronted a stranger urinating on his car in central Edmonton, Canada.

A 55-year-old Canadian-Indian businessman, was attacked viciously by a stranger in Edmonton, Canada, after he confronted the latter for peeing on his vehicle. The shocking attack occurred on 19th October, and Arvi died five days later, on 24th October.

According to the Edmonton Police Service (EPS), Arvi Singh Sagoo, 55, was found unconscious with live threatening injuries. He died five days later. On the night of the incident, Arvi had gone out for dinner with his girlfriend. When they came back to their car early the next morning, they saw a man pissing on it.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Arvi asked the stranger. The man, Kyle Papin, 40, replied, "Whatever I want," before walking up to Arvi and punching him hard in the head, Global News reported. Arvi collapsed on the ground. Police nabbed the accused.

- Agencies

Rupee falls 47p to close at 88.69 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

The rupee depreciated 47 paise to close at 88.69 against the American currency on Thursday on a strong US dollar, weak domestic markets, and a hawkish US Fed. Forex traders said the US Federal Reserve slashed interest rates by 25 bps in its Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting. However, Fed Chair Jerome Powell's commentary was hawkish, trimming rate-cut expectations for December. Moreover, month-end dollar demand from Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and foreign fund outflows may also weigh on the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 88.37, and later fell to an intra-day low of 88.74. The local unit finally settled at 88.69 against the greenback, registering a loss of 47 paise from its previous close. *—PTI*

Yellow peas import to attract 30 pc duty from 1 Nov

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The government has imposed a 30 per cent duty on yellow peas import from November 1. However, shipments with a bill of lading on or before October 31 would still be imported with zero duty. In a notification, the Department of Revenue said import of yellow peas will attract 10 per cent standard rate and 20 per cent Agriculture Infrastructure and Development cess (AIDC) if the Bill of Lading is issued on or after November 1, 2025. The government in May had allowed duty-free import of yellow peas till March 2026. *—PTI*

Youtube offers 'buyout' option to employees

YouTube is offering voluntary severance packages to US employees as part of its first major reorganization in a decade, positioning artificial intelligence at the core of its operations. CEO Neal Mohan told staff in an internal memo that the restructuring aims to modernise how product teams work, not to cut jobs, as the company prepares for what it calls "the next frontier—AI." The overhaul follows Google CEO Sundar Pichai's push for all divisions to integrate AI more deeply to drive innovation and efficiency. While YouTube insists no roles are being eliminated, the buyout program signals a broader effort to streamline as AI becomes central to its product strategy. Under the new setup, three primary product groups will report directly to Mohan. Christian Oestlien will head subscription products, including YouTube Music, Premium, TV, Primetime Channels, Podcasts, and Commerce. Chief Product Officer Johanna Voolich will lead viewer products, overseeing the main app, Search and Discovery, YouTube Kids, Learning, and Trust and Safety.The restructuring reflects YouTube's effort to evolve with rapid advances in AI that are transforming how content is created, recommended, and consumed. Companies like Amazon also invest heavily in AI-driven innovation. *—PTI*

Next phase of UPI? Chat-based payments on the card

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The next phase of growth in India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) will come from frictionless biometric authentication and conversational "chat and pay" journeys, according to a report by Worldline, a global payment service provider.

The report highlighted that UPI's next wave of expansion is already visible, with global corridors such as Singapore and the UAE extending UPI's reach beyond India. Chat-based conversational payment journeys and UPI Autopay are making transactions more seamless within apps, while biometric authentication pilots are expected to redefine user experience and expand adoption across diverse demographics.

India's UPI ecosystem is driven by two primary flows -- peer-to-peer (P2P) transfers and peer-to-merchant (P2M) payments.

During the first half (1H) of 2025, P2P transactions grew by 31 per cent to 39.35 billion, while P2M transactions surged by 37 per cent to 67.01 billion.

The report also pointed out that the next set of growth drivers will include credit on UPI and small-ticket EMIs.

The report concluded that the first half of 2025 marked a significant milestone for India's digital payments ecosystem, reinforcing the country's position as a global leader in scale, innovation, and financial inclusion. *—ANI*

Sensex settles 593 pts lower, Nifty below 25,900

Selling and profit booking pulled sectoral indices into red

MUMBAI, 30 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Indian equity markets closed sharply lower on Thursday as widespread selling and profit booking pulled all sectoral indices into the red. The benchmarks opened weak and stayed under pressure through the session, tracking cautious global sentiment after US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signaled that future rate cuts were not assured.

Investor mood soured further as Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 2,540.2 crore on 29 October. Global cues also weighed on sentiment — European stocks slipped ahead of the European Central Bank's policy decision, while most Asian markets ended lower after the Bank of Japan kept rates unchanged but hinted at potential future hikes amid persistent inflation.

The SENSEX fell 592.67 points, or 0.70 per cent, to close at 84,404.46 after moving between 84,312.65 and 84,906.95. The index saw seven advances against 23 declines. The broader market was mixed, with the BSE Mid-cap index inching up 0.01 per cent and the Small-cap index slipping 0.06 per cent.

Sectorally, Industrials (+0.28 per cent), Oil & Gas (+0.17 per cent), and Capital Goods (+0.14 per cent) were among the few gainers, while Telecom (-2.52 per cent), TECK (-1.02 per cent) led losses.

The NIFTY50 dropped 176.05 points, or 0.68%, to settle at 25,877.85, with 12 stocks advancing and 38 declining. Top gainers included Coal India (+1.49 per cent), Larsen & Toubro (+0.74 per cent), and Bharat Electronics (+0.66 per cent), while Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (-3.89 per cent) and Cipla (-2.59 per cent) were major laggards.

Across Europe, France's CAC slipped 0.54 per cent, the UK's FTSE 100 fell 0.41 per cent, and Germany's DAX eased 0.06 per cent. *—Agencies*

RS 95-100 PER SHARE

Groww targets $7B valuation as IPO opens on 4 Nov

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Billionbrains Garage Ventures, the parent company of stock broking firm Groww, on Thursday fixed a price band of Rs 95-100 per share for its upcoming Initial Public Offering (IPO). It is targeting a valuation of over Rs 61,700 crore (about USD 7 billion).

The company's Rs 6,632 crore IPO would open for public subscription on 4 November and conclude on 7 November, the stock broking firm announced. The bidding for anchor investors would open for a day on 3 November.

The IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,060 crore along with an Offer For Sale (OFS) component of 55.72 crore equity shares by promoters and investor shareholders.

As a part of the OFS, the company's promoters are offloading shares. The promoters include Lalit Keshre, Harsh Jain, Neeraj Singh, and Ishan Bansal - each offering up to 1 million shares, besides, investors such as Peak XV Partners Investments VI-1, YC Holdings II, Ribbit Capital V, GW-E Ribbit Opportunity V, Internet Fund VI Pte Ltd, and Kauffman Fellows Fund, LP.

Groww's founders own 27.97 per cent of the company and have filed as promoters of the company with a 20 per cent lock-in for 1.5 years from the time of listing. In the IPO, they are offering to sell only 0.07 per cent of the total shares.

The company, which is backed by marquee investors like Peak XV, Tiger Capital, and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, plans to use proceeds of the IPO for investment in technology development and business expansion.

Groww cofounder and COO Harsh Jain said the company will continue to focus on brand building, launching new products, and investing in technology.

Headquartered in Bengaluru and founded in 2016, Groww emerged as India's largest stock broker with over 12.6 million active clients and an over 26 per cent market share as of June 2025. *—PTI*

Fed cuts interest rates amid economic uncertainty

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

The Federal Reserve has announced a reduction in the target range for the federal funds rate by 0.25 percentage points to 3.75-4 per cent, reflecting a shift in monetary policy amid signs of a slowing economy. This decision, revealed in a Federal Reserve press release on Wednesday, comes as job growth has decelerated and unemployment has increased slightly, though it remains low through August.

Inflation, which had previously eased earlier this year, has begun to rise again and remains elevated. The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) stated that it aims to balance its objectives of maximum employment and price stability while navigating the changing economic landscape.

The Fed indicated that it will closely monitor new data and evolving economic conditions before making any further policy changes. It also plans to conclude the reduction of its aggregate securities holdings by 1 December. *—PTI*

Gold demand in India falls 16% in Q3

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

India's gold demand fell 16 per cent by volume in the July-September quarter of 2025 as record-high prices dampened consumer appetite, though investment buying surged on safe-haven appeal, the World Gold Council said on Thursday.

Total gold demand declined to 209.4 tonnes in the third quarter from 248.3 tonnes a year earlier, according to the industry body.

However, the value of demand jumped 23 per cent to Rs 2,03,240 crore from Rs 1,65,380 crore, reflecting sharply higher gold prices.

Gold jewellery demand, which accounts for the bulk of consumption in the world's second-largest bullion market, dropped 31 per cent to 117.7 tonnes from 171.6 tonnes. But the value of jewellery purchases remained flat at around Rs 1,14,270 crore as buyers adjusted to elevated price levels.

Investment demand showed "remarkable strength", rising 20 per cent by volume to 91.6 tonnes and surging 74 per cent

in value terms to Rs 88,970 crore from Rs 51,080 crore, the WGC said.

The average gold price in India rose to Rs 97,074.9 per 10 grams during the quarter, up 46 per cent from Rs 66,614.1 a year earlier, excluding import duty and GST. International prices averaged USD 3,456.5 per ounce, compared with USD 2,474.3 in the year-ago period.

"There is a 16 per cent drop in volume but there is a 23 per cent historic rise in value. We cannot ignore that," Sachin Jain, World Gold Council Regional CEO for India told PTI. "Indian consumers are catching up with the rise in per capita income and disposable income." *—PTI*

Adani Power Q2 net profit falls 12% to Rs 2,906 crore

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Adani Power on Thursday posted a 12 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,906 crore in the September quarter, driven by a rise in expenses.

It had clocked a net profit of Rs 3,297.52 crore in the July-September period of the preceding 2024-25 financial year, the Adani Group entity said in an exchange filing.

Total income increased to Rs 14,307.79 crore in September quarter from Rs 14,062.84 crore last year. The revenues were higher despite lower merchant tariffs and import coal prices, supported by higher power sales, the company said.

Total expenses stood at Rs 10,341.59 crore, higher from Rs 9,928.76 crore in Q2 FY25.

The company is also expanding its market presence by securing another 4.5 GW of new long-term PPAs under the SHAKTI scheme. Its consolidated operating capacity grew to 18,150 MW as of 30 September, from 17,550 MW as of September 2024, on account of the acquisition of 600 MW Vidarbha Industries Power Ltd, it said.

APL signed a Power Supply Agreement (PSA) of 2,400 MW (gross) capacity for 25 years with Bihar State Power Generation Company Limited (BSPGCL), to be supplied from a new 2,400 MW greenfield Ultra-Supercritical Thermal Power Project (USCTPP) in Pirpainti, Bhagalpur of Bihar.

It received an Letters of Allocation of 570.5 MW (gross) capacity from the Power Company of Karnataka Ltd (PCKL) to be supplied from the existing 1,370 MW capacity of the Raipur thermal power plant for 25 years. *—PTI*

ADANI AIRPORTS TO USE AGENTIC AI

Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Limited and India's largest operator of Public Private Partnership airports, on Thursday announced a strategic partnership with AIONOS, an InterGlobe Enterprises AI company, to deploy a multi-lingual, omni-channel agentic AI solution to transform the passenger help desk experience. AIONOS' proprietary Agentic AI platform, IntelliMate M, combines domain-led Conversational AI and automation to enable seamless interactions with customers and employees via voice, chat, web, and mobile. The AI-driven solution will act as a 24*7 intelligent concierge, helping travellers access flight updates, gate information, baggage status, directions & airport services in multiple languages, including English and regional dialects.

BSNL achieves 93 per cent of revenue target

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

State-owned telecom company Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) achieved 93 per cent of its target revenue, recording Rs 5,347 crore for the September quarter of the 2025–26 financial year, Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia announced on Thursday.

Following a quarterly review, Scindia said BSNL's revenue for the first half of FY26 stood at Rs 11,134 crore. The company has set a bold target of increasing annual revenue by 20 per cent to Rs 27,500 crore, building on last year's strong performance.

Scindia highlighted an improvement in average revenue per user (ARPU), a key indicator of telecom growth, which rose 12 per cent from 81 in Q1 to Rs 91 in Q2. Several circles, including Maharashtra, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh (East), Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Jammu & Kashmir, performed exceptionally well, with ARPU reaching Rs 214 in some areas.

However, he expressed concern over weaker performance in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Kolkata, where ARPU remains around Rs 60. Scindia said consistent efforts were needed to enhance customer engagement, service quality, and network efficiency to ensure balanced growth across all regions. *—PTI*

'LUNA' CAN SING & FEEL TOO

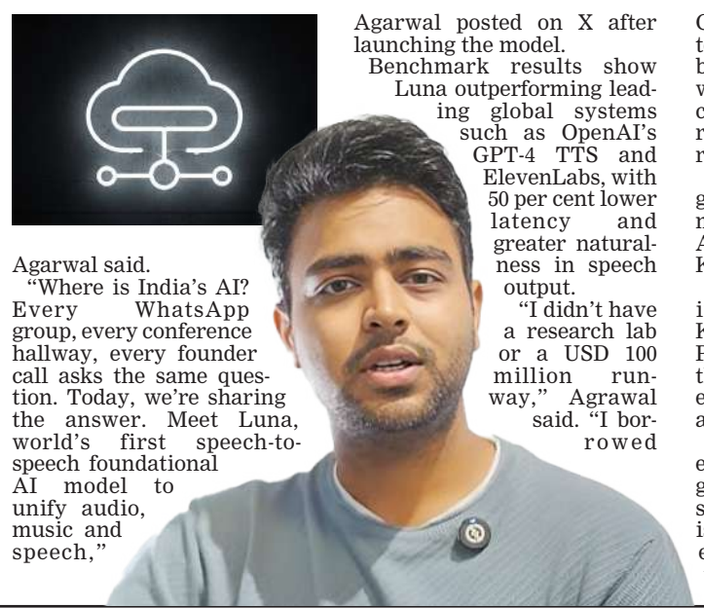
IITian builds world's 1st emotive voice AI

JAIPUR, 30 OCT

Jaipur-based 25-year-old founder **Sparsh Agrawal** has unveiled one of the first speech-to-speech foundational AI models that can sing, whisper, pause, and respond with emotional intelligence. He developed it all without big-tech infrastructure or venture capital funding.

Launched under his startup Pixa AI, Luna AI directly processes audio to generate human-like speech instead of converting it to text and back, resulting in faster, more expressive, and emotionally aware conversations.

The system's architecture allows it to whisper, modulate tone, and even sing, creating an experience that feels more human than machine,



Agarwal said.

"Where is India's AI? Every WhatsApp group, every conference hallway, every founder call asks the same question. Today, we're sharing the answer. Meet Luna, world's first speech-to-speech foundational AI model to unify audio, music and speech," Agarwal posted on X after launching the model.

Benchmark results show Luna outperforming leading global systems such as OpenAI's GPT-4 TTS and ElevenLabs, with 50 per cent lower latency and greater naturalness in speech output.

"I didn't have a research lab or a USD 100 million runway," Agrawal said. "I borrowed GPUs, cloud credits, and even took on credit card debt to build Luna. This is proof that world-class technology can come from India – built with resourcefulness, not just resources."

Agarwal is an IIT-BHU graduate. His other teammates are Nitish Kartik, Apoorv Singh and Pratyush Kumar.

Backed by investors including Kunal Shah, Kunal Kapoor, and Nikhil Kamath, Pixa AI aims to make Luna the "voice layer" for global entertainment, wellness, and automotive ecosystems.

Early demand has already emerged from automakers, gaming platforms, and consumer AI companies. Agrawal is the only solo founder selected from over 15,000 applicants to the WTFund. *—PTI*

Jio users to get Rs 35,100 Google AI Pro for free

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Reliance Industries on Thursday said its artificial intelligence arm Reliance Intelligence has partnered with Google to offer free access to Google AI Pro for 18 months, worth Rs 35,100 to select Jio 5G users initially.

The Reliance-Google offer includes higher access to Google's Gemini 2.5 Pro model in the Gemini app, higher limits to generate stunning images and videos with their state-of-the-art Nano Banana and Veo 3.1 models, expanded access to Notebook LM for study and research, 2 TB of cloud storage, etc, a statement said.

The development follows an announcement by OpenAI to offer 'ChatGPT Go', which supports higher query limits and more image generation, free for one year to users in India who sign up during a limited-time promotional period beginning 4 November.

OpenAI ChatGPT Go, at present, is priced at Rs 399 per month. The access will be given to unlimited 5G plan subscribers of Jio in the age group of 18-25 years and will swiftly expand to include every Jio customer nationwide.

Reliance has also announced a partnership with Google Cloud to broaden access to its advanced AI hardware accelerators, Tensor Processing Units (TPUs). *— PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Getting better every day, says Shreyas Iyer

SYDNEY, 30 OCT

Star Indian batter Shreyas Iyer on Thursday said he is "on the road to recovery and getting better every passing day" after sustaining a ruptured spleen and rib cage injury during the third ODI against Australia. The 30-year-old had sustained a lower left rib cage injury while attempting a difficult running catch to dismiss Alex Carey off Harshit Rana's bowling last Saturday. "I'm currently in the recovery process and getting better, every passing day," Iyer posted on his X and Instagram accounts for the first time since sustaining the injury. "I'm deeply grateful to see all the kind wishes and support I've received - it truly means a lot. Thank you for keeping me in your thoughts," he added. —*PTI*

Anahat's dream run at CO ends with a SFs defeat

TORONTO, 30 OCT

Teenage Indian squash sensation Anahat Singh's impressive run at the Canadian Open came to an end with a straight-games defeat to World No. 10 Gina Kennedy of England in the semifinals. The 17-year-old, ranked 43rd in the world, went down 0-3 (5-11, 8-11, 10-12) in 30 minutes to Kennedy in the last four stage of the USD 96,250 PSA Silver event on Wednesday night. Despite the loss, Anahat enjoyed a remarkable campaign, upsetting world No. 20 Alves of France in the pre-quarterfinals before scripting the biggest win of her career by toppling defending champion and world No. 7 Gilis of Belgium in the quarterfinals. The win against Gilis was Anahat's maiden victory over a top-10 opponent.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

IOC, SA cancel 12-year deal to host Esports Olympics

GENEVA, 30 OCT

The IOC and Saudi Arabia have canceled their 12-year deal to host the video gaming Esports Olympics in Riyadh. The International Olympic Committee said on Thursday that they "mutually agreed that they will end their cooperation on the Olympic Esports Games." It is a rare failure for a Saudi-backed sports project that was a key part of the Vision 2030 program driven by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "At the same time, both parties are committed to pursuing their own esports ambitions on separate paths," the Olympic body said, announcing a reset of a signature project seven months into the presidency of Kirsty Coventry. The partnership was confirmed on the eve of the Paris Olympics last year.—*PTI*

PCB increases domestic contracts to 157 players

KARACHI, 30 OCT

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday increased the number of domestic cricket contracts from 131 to 157 players for the 2025/26 season. The PCB also added another category to the domestic contracts, with players now placed in four categories, an official said. The PCB has awarded 30 players Category A contracts, 55 in Category B, 51 in Category C, and 21 in Category D. "These contracts have been given keeping in mind the performance of players in the previous season," the board official said.—*PTI*

India head to Melbourne with nose ahead

Rain is also forecast for Friday in Melbourne, but without worrying the 2nd T20I match

Rain had the last word in Canberra as the match was abandoned with India strongly placed at 97 for one
PHOTO: X/@BCCI

MELBOURNE, 30 OCT

Formidable India have their tails up as they head to the gargantuan MCG for the second T20I against Australia here on Friday, thanks to the influx of young talent and the return to form of skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

The likes of Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, and Shivam Dube arrived on Australian shores after having redefined the art of T20 batting with their relentless power-hitting, but the lack of big runs from their captain's blade has been a bit of a dampener for the team in recent times.

Entering the opener of the five-match series under scrutiny, Suryakumar, however, roared back to form with a 24-ball 39, and his humongous 125-meter six off Josh Hazlewood will stay in memory for long.

However, rain had the last word in Canberra as the match was abandoned with India strongly placed at 97 for one after 9.4 overs, and both Suryakumar and Shubman Gill in the mood to decimate the Australian attack.

Rain is also forecast for Friday in Melbourne, but without worrying about what's beyond their control, the visitors will look to pick up where they left off in the abandoned series opener.

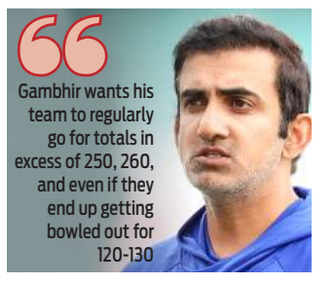
Going into the second match, what must have gladdened Indian hearts most was the return to form of Suryakumar, as the team continues on its World Cup path with its high-risk, high-reward approach implemented by head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Gambhir wants his team to regularly go for totals in excess of 250, 260, and even if they end up getting bowled out for 120-130 in trying to do that and lose a few matches in the process, he wouldn't mind.

INDIA VS AUSTRALIA

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA
Match starts at
1.45 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD AT MELBOURNE	
PLAYED:	33
INDIA Won:	20
AUS Won:	11
No Result	2



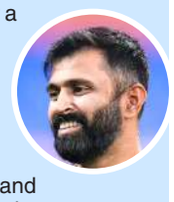
Gambhir wants his team to regularly go for totals in excess of 250, 260, and even if they end up getting bowled out for 120-130

Cricket Australia reports USD 7 million loss

Cricket Australia (CA) announced a net deficit of A$11.3 million ($7.34 million) for the 2024-25 financial year on Thursday, with a steep increase in costs offsetting a jump in revenue from hosting the Border-Gavaskar series against powerhouse India.

CA said at its annual general meeting (AGM) that total revenue increased by A$49.2 million from the previous year to A$453.7 million, predominantly driven by a new domestic media deal and match revenue from the five-Test series against India. Expenses increased by A$24.1 million, which included marketing costs for the India series and funding 70 extra days of touring for national teams. —*PTI*

Abhishek Nayar named head coach of KKR



Kolkata Knight Riders on Thursday expectedly named former India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar as its new head coach following the departure of Chandrakant Pandit after a three-season tenure. Nayar has been associated with the KKR since 2018 and is one of the key members of their think-tank, often viewed as someone who held a lot of influence in the dressing room when it came to team selection. For close to nine months, Nayar was a part of Gautam Gambhir's coaching set-up in the national team. —*PTI*

2nd T20I: Pakistan aim to bounce back against South Africa

LAHORE, 30 OCT

Pakistan will face South Africa in the second T20I of their five-match series on 31 October.

The match is scheduled to take place at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, starting at 8:30 pm IST.

In the first T20I, South Africa's Reeza Hendricks scored a brilliant half-century and played a crucial role, helping the visitors secure a comprehensive 55-run victory over Pakistan.

In the first T20I, South Africa posted a strong total of 194/9, thanks to Hendricks's 60 and contributions from Quinton de Kock (23), Tony de Zorzi (33), and George Linde (36).

Despite Mohammad Nawaz's late fightback with a three-wicket haul and a 36-run knock, Pakistan fell short in their chase.

Saim Ayub (37) was the only other Pakistani batter to score over 30. Babar Azam was dismissed for a second-ball duck. —*PTI*

Kotian, Suthar strikes help India A limit SA A to 299/9

BENGALURU, 30 OCT

South Africa A resisted through a century-stand between JordanHermann and Zubayr Hamza. Still, India's spinners, led by Tanush Kotian, pluckedwickets at regular intervals to keep the visitors to 299 for nine on the firstday of the opening four-day match here on Thursday.

Hermann(71) and Hamza (66) shared a 130-run stand for the second wicket after beingasked to bat first, holding the SA innings together for a session and a half.Butonce Hamza fell to pacer Gurnoor Brar (1/45) while attempting a ramp shot to becaught behind by Rishabh Pant, the Indian bowlers wrested back the control. Hamzawas not precisely happy with the call, as was Hermann later with the umpire'sleg-before decision in favor of off-spinner Kotian (4/83), the most impressiveIndian bowler on show on this day.Butthe other three top-order batters should have little grouse in theirdismissals.

OpenerLesego Senokwane slashed pacer Anshul Kamboj to Ayush Mhatre at first slip, andRivaldo Moonsamy edged left-arm spinner and Manav Suthar (2/62) to Ayush Badoniat the cordon. SkipperMarques Ackermann uppishly flicked Kotian to Suthar inside the circle, as theProteas lost 27 for three to slip to 197 for five.

However,until Hermann and Hamza were in the middle,

Tanush Kotian celebrates with team-mates after dismissing Jordan Hermann
PHOTO: PTI

RISHABH PANT
PHOTO: PTI

South Africa were in cruise mode,and the three Indian pacers Brar, Kamboj, and Khaleel Ahmed were guilty ofinsipid spells despite some early assistance on the pitch. Hermannstarted with a flurry of fours off Ahmed before settling into Hamza's sidekick-role. Rishabh Pant's keeping Pant took a bit to settle into his rhythm behind the stumps, and once he came toterms with the surface and bowlers, the wicketkeeper was quite tidy.This was Pant's first competitive outing since getting injured in the fourth Testagainst England in July, and he did give plenty of positive signs.Ofcourse, Pant was in his elements once he settled and gave some entertainingmoments through stump mike. Kishanreplaces Jagadeesan Ishan Kishan, who was not in the original squad, on Thursday replaced N Jagadeesanafter the latter picked up a hand injury while training on the match eve. —*PTI*

YOUTH ASIAN GAMES

Indian boxers Khushi Chand, Ahaana Sharma, and Bhoreshi Pujari won a hat-trick of gold medals while Lanchenba Singh Moibungkhongbam bagged the silver
PHOTO: PTI

India win 4 golds, 2 silvers in boxing

BAHRAIN, 30 OCT

India continued their impressive show at the Youth Asian Games, clinching four golds, two silvers, and one bronze in boxing, along with three gold and two silver medals in beach wrestling here on Thursday. India's medal tally has swelled to 47 medals, including 13 golds, 17 silvers, and 17 bronzes.

The boxers delivered a historic performance, finishing with the highest medal tally by any discipline in the Indian contingent as Khushi Chand (46kg), Ahaana Sharma (50kg), Chandrika Bhoreshi Pujari (54kg), and Anshika (+80kg) secured gold medals.

Khushi defeated China's Luo Jinxiu 4:1, displaying exceptional precision and control, while Ahaana followed with a first-round Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) win against Ma Jong Hyang of Korea. Chandrika then secured gold with a commanding 5:0 decision over Uzbekistan's Muhammadova Kumriniso, and Anshika added the fourth gold, while Harnoor Kaur (66kg) claimed silver after a hard-fought bout.

On the boys' side, Lanchenba Singh Moibungkhongbam (50kg) fought valiantly but narrowly missed gold, taking silver against Kazakhstan's Nurmakhan Zhumagali. Earlier, Anant Deshmukh (66kg) clinched bronze, rounding off a stellar campaign for India's young boxers.In beach wrestling, Sani Subhash Fulmali and Anjali won gold medals in the boys' and girls' 60kg and 55kg categories, respectively, while Arjun Ruhil also finished on top in the boys' 90kg event.Sujay Nagnath Tanpure (70kg) and Ravinder (80kg) settled for silver medals after losing their respective finals. —*PTI*

BWF AIRBADMINTON

First-ever World Cup to be held in Sharjah from 11–14 Dec

MOHALI, 30 OCT

As many as 12 national teams are set to vie for the top honours when the first-ever BWF AirBadminton World Cup takes place in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, m 11–14 December.

Australia, Germany, Azerbaijan, Hong Kong, Brazil, Indonesia, Bulgaria, Nigeria, China, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Venezuela have earned their place in the tournament after a rigorous qualification process. "A maximum of 96 athletes will compete across three events: men's triples, women's triples, and the team relay," BWF said in a release."Former men's singles top 10 player Wong Wing Ki Vincent heads the lineup for Team Relay favourites Hong Kong China."The tournament will be held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah and Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council of the UAE Badminton Federation. "AirBadminton, the new outdoor version of the sport, is BWF's emerging growth discipline with immense potential to expand the global reach of badminton," BWF President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul said. —*PTI*

Paris Masters: Norrie falls to in-form Valentin Vacherot

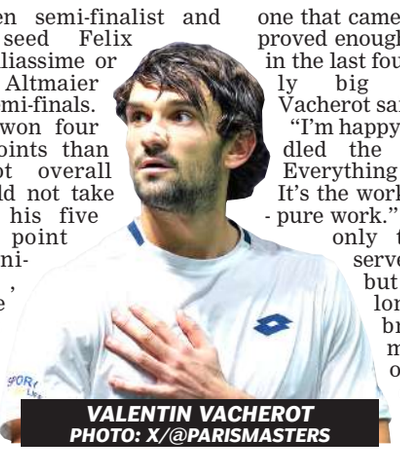
PARIS, 30 OCT

Cameron Norrie's Paris Masters campaign came to an abrupt end on Thursday as he became the latest to fall to the in-form Valentin Vacherot. Norrie saw off Carlos Alcaraz in the second round, hailing it as "the biggest win of my career", with the victory marking the first time he had ever defeated a world No. 1.

But he could not back up his heroics from that three-set tussle as he lost 7-6(4) 6-4 to Vacherot.

The Monegasque is making his debut in the Paris main draw and will now face either US Open semi-finalist and ninth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime or Daniel Altmaier in the semi-finals. Norrie won four more points than Vacherot overall but could not take any of his five break point opportunities, while his opponent took the only one that came his way and it proved enough to book a spot in the last four."It was a really big performance," Vacherot said.

"I'm happy with how I handled the hot moments. Everything is clicking now. It's the work of many years - pure work." Norrie dropped only two points on serve in the first set but spurned his lone chance to break, while more break point opportunities came and went at 2-2 in the second set. —*PTI*



VALENTIN VACHEROT
PHOTO: X/@PARISMASTERS

MAJOR LEAGUE SIGNINGS

Son earning $11.15 million in a deal with LA FC

BETHESDA, 30 OCT

Los Angeles FC forward Son Heung-Min tops Major League Soccer's summer signings with a salary of $10,368,750 and total compensation of $11,152,852, becoming the second-highest-paid player behind Inter Miami's Lionel Messi.

Son joined LAFC in August after more than a decade at Tottenham and scored nine goals in 10 MLS matches. Messi receives a $12 million salary and has $20,446,667 in total compensation from Inter Miami. Those figures cover what Messi receives from his initial MLS deal, which runs through the 2025 season, including any marketing bonuses and agent's fees. They do not account for any additional agreements with the team or its affiliates, or for any performance bonuses. Miami said last week Messi had agreed to a new deal through 2028.

Midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, Messi's new Miami teammate, has a $1.5 million salary and $3,619,320 in total compensation. Other notable additions to the league during the summer signing window included San Diego winger Hirving "Chucky" Lozano ($6 million/$7,633,333), Chicago winger Jonathan Bamba ($5 million/$5,581,806), New York City midfielder Nico Fernández ($3.65 million), Portland winger Kristoffer Velde ($2.28 million/$3,027,000), Charlotte Zaha ($2,666,667/$2,751,667), Toronto midfielder Djordje Mihailovic ($2,158,335/$2,278,335), Colorado midfielder Paxten Aaronson ($2 million/$2,228,063), Columbus forward Wessam Ali ($1.8 million/$2,157,375) —*PTI*

SON HEUNG-MIN
PHOTO: X/@HM_SON7

Australian teen cricketer dies after getting hit in neck

MELBOURNE, 30 OCT

Ben Austin, a 17-year-old Australian cricketer, has died after being hit in the neck during a training session in Melbourne, evoking widespread grief and painful memories of the tragic passing of Phillip Hughes in 2014.

Austin was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition after being struck in the neck and the head area by a ball while training for his club at Ferntree Gully in suburban Melbourne on Tuesday.

Austin was facing bowlers in the nets ahead of a T20 match when the injury took place in front of his teammates.

He was put on a ventilator after the incident, but he succumbed to his injury. —*PTI*

India, Australia players wear black armbands

India and Australia players on Thursday wore black armbands during their Women's World Cup semi-final as a tribute to teen cricketer Ben Austin, who passed away after being hit by a ball during training